

VARSNAW, Poland (AP) — For the second time in a row, no first prize was awarded at the end of the prestigious 13th International Frederic Chopin Competition. Philippe Chatriain of France and the public's favorite, Alexander Shteynman of Russia, were each awarded second prize and \$20,000 by the 24-member jury. The third prize and \$15,000 went to Gabriela Montero, 25, a Venezuelan-born American. Rein Urban, 19, from Russia, came in fourth and was awarded \$10,000. Japan's Ryo Miyamura, 24, won fifth prize, worth \$6,000, and Magdalena Lisak, 24, of Poland got the sixth prize and \$4,000. Traditional prizes for best Mazurka, Polonaise and Concerto were not awarded. None of the six laureates looked happy. As Alexander Grudinski, the competition's director, read the verdict, fans who waited at the Warsaw Philharmonia until well after midnight to hear the results reacted with boo and cries of "scandal." The first prize was awarded in the last competition, in 1990, and observers noted that the repeat could mean either that the quality of top-level contestants has deteriorated in recent years, or that the competition's rules should be adjusted to new musical styles.

'Mariboro Man' dies of lung cancer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — David McLean, a noted actor who for many years portrayed the "Mariboro Man" in television cigarette commercials, died of lung cancer on Oct. 17 from lung cancer, a longtime spokesman said. The spokesman said McLean, 50, reportedly a close friend of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, was leading his country's delegation to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) conference. Iraqi embassy spokesman in Amman Adel Ibrahim said he died of a heart attack. The Iraqi embassy in Rome declined to give any details. Police said Rashid was dead on the floor of his hotel room in the Cavalieri Hilton, a plush hotel on the outskirts of the capital, when officers arrived.

Charles, Camilla appear at same party

LONDON (AP) — Prince Charles brought his tabloid editors as he appeared at a party attended by his close friend, Camilla Parker Bowles. The event, described in the Daily Mail as "a low-key, high-risk evening" by the couple, marked the front pages of most of the popular press. Thursday was the 10th anniversary of the wedding of Prince Charles and Camilla, 48, who have been seen at the same public event since the prince's admission last year that he had strayed from his marriage vows with Princess Diana. Jonathan Dimbleby, the prince's biographer, had identified Mrs. Parker Bowles as the other woman. Both appeared Wednesday at the 50th birthday of Lady Sarah Kennel. Mrs. Parker Bowles arrived two hours before the prince, who was detained at a film premiere. The Sun newspaper reported that Mrs. Parker Bowles' ex-husband, Andrew, and then son Tom were also at the party.

King Hassan, Rabin meet in New York

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Morocco's King Hassan II and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin met for an hour late Friday, discussing the Middle East peace process, bilateral relations and other topics, U.N. sources said. The king received Mr. Rabin at the Plaza Hotel in Manhattan in one of the many mini-summits taking place on the sidelines of the United Nations' 50th anniversary celebrations. It was the third public meeting between the two leaders. Neither had announced the one-on-one meeting in advance. Israeli sources reported the king said he hopes that new steps could be taken in the near future towards normalising relations between the two countries. The monarch encouraged Mr. Rabin to pursue the Israeli-Arab peace process, notably pressing Israel to move more quickly and radically in the case of Palestinian autonomy, according to several sources. The leaders also spoke about North Africa and the presidential election scheduled in Algeria next month. Mr. Rabin was also to meet in New York with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and discuss the Syrian situation.

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Blind student completes dissertation

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, the Regent, said Saturday that higher education institutions in Jordan were keen to give all citizens their proper role in the development process. After attending a masters dissertation by a blind student at the Arabic Language Academy, Prince Ra'd said this occasion "shows the need to give the blind a suitable role in serving their society." He commended the achievement by the student, Basma Rawashdeh, who was granted the masters degree after she completed her dissertation on "Linguistic Issues in Ben Fares' Book on Linguistics — A Critical Study."

King arrives in New York

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday arrived in New York to attend the 50th anniversary celebrations of the United Nations. The King will deliver an address at the celebrations outlining Jordan's views on the role of the U.N. in resolving international disputes and the U.N.'s activities in social services, health and education. The King is accompanied on the visit by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah and His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, the King's military secretary.

Israel to grant asylum to Iraqis

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel has decided to grant asylum to most of a group of 31 Iraqi defectors who snuck across its heavily guarded borders in recent years, an official said Saturday. Police spokesman Eric Bar-Chen said an unspecified number of the Iraqis, who have been jailed since arrival, will be released in coming days and allowed to live and work in Israel. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin decided on the move as "a humanitarian gesture" after concluding most of them did not pose a security risk. Mr. Bar-Chen said, "They escaped from the Iraqi regime for political reasons, but there are a few about whom there are some doubts, and they will not be released." The exact number to be released will be decided Sunday by Police Minister Moshe Shaleh and state attorney Dorit Beinisch.

Iraq minister dies in Rome hotel

ROME (AP) — Iraq's agriculture minister died of a heart attack in Rome where he was attending a U.N. conference, Iraqi officials said Saturday. Khaled Abdul Munim Rashid, 50, reportedly a close friend of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, was leading his country's delegation to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) conference. Iraqi embassy spokesman in Amman Adel Ibrahim said he died of a heart attack. The Iraqi embassy in Rome declined to give any details. Police said Rashid was dead on the floor of his hotel room in the Cavalieri Hilton, a plush hotel on the outskirts of the capital, when officers arrived.

Suha Arafat wants another child

CAIRO (AP) — Suha Arafat, the wife of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, hopes to give a new brother or sister to her newborn daughter Zahwa, she said in an interview with the Egyptian daily Al-Ahram published on Saturday. "If God wills, I hope Zahwa will have a brother or a sister. But I don't want a dozen kids, because raising children is a huge responsibility," Ms. Arafat said. She said she wanted the difference between her children's ages to be "minimal."

Peres favours basing major infrastructure in Jordan

The Jerusalem Post
FOREIGN MINISTER Shimon Peres, elaborating on his vision of Israel at peace, said Thursday he envisions much of the country's infrastructure being located outside its borders. Addressing business leaders in preparation for the Amman economic conference, Mr. Peres said Israel's shrinking size makes every piece of land highly valuable. He advocated placing much of the country's infrastructure, including the planned development of a canal, railroad line, and superhighway, in neighbouring Jordan, which is five times bigger than Israel. "Suddenly, any piece of land becomes vitally important to this country," he said.

Saudi police hunt for mosque bomber in bizarre incident

Motive for blast that killed six described as personal vendetta

RIYADH (Agencies) — Saudi police searched Saturday for the perpetrator of a bomb attack on a crowded village mosque that killed six people and wounded 101 others during the weekly prayers, blaming a personal dispute. The authorities have begun inquiries to find the culprit of this abominable crime, which took place on Friday in Quba village, some 500 kilometres southwest of Riyadh, the Interior Ministry said. A senior government official said the authorities had identified the attacker, who was still on the run. "The person who launched the bomb attack on the worshippers is known to the authorities. He lives in the village," Hussein Al Zalfa, governor of Bishah region, which includes Quba, told AFP. Mr. Zalfa, however, refused to name the suspect or identify any motive for the attack but insisted that the bombing was not linked to any political campaign.

The ministry said "meticulous research was under way on the spot in search for clues to establish the type of the explosive and the person who committed it (the crime)." One well-placed Gulf source, familiar with the region where the attack happened, said some kind of personal vendetta would not be out of place in Bishah, a tribal area where feuds are common. But he added: "Violent vendetta is not strange, but the nature of the incident itself is alien to the Saudi society." Some Gulf-based diplomats said it was hard to reconcile an indiscriminate attack in a crowded public place with the idea of settling a personal grievance. "It will probably take some time before establishing the real motives, but why would somebody choose a mosque packed by worshippers on a Friday to settle personal disagreements?" said one diplomat.

The attack took place at midday as about 500 people attended prayers but the authorities in Saudi Arabia — who are traditionally tight-lipped on domestic news — kept a black-out until early the next day. Riyadh was also rife with speculation of a family vendetta or of a wronged worker taking his revenge on an employer. Saudi opposition groups have also targeted mosques in the past. In November 1979, a group of Sunni Muslim militants seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Islam's holiest city. At the end of a two-week battle, more than 200 people were killed and around 100 captured insurgents were later beheaded. Two explosions rocked Mecca during the 1989 annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

U.S. Senate to begin debate on Jerusalem bill tomorrow

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The U.S. Senate will open debate Monday on a controversial bill calling for the U.S. embassy to be moved to occupied Jerusalem from Tel Aviv, a spokesman for Senate majority leader Bob Dole said. The bipartisan bill, sponsored primarily by Mr. Dole, sets a timetable for relocating the embassy, a move the administration of President Bill Clinton has warned would deal a major blow to ongoing Middle East peace talks. The measure calls for groundbreaking by December 1996 with a view to opening the new embassy by May 31, 1999.

"It's coming up for debate on the floor on Monday," Dole spokesman Jeremy Walkson confirmed Friday. The White House has described the bill as "a bad idea" that could exacerbate difficulties in negotiations between Israel and Syria. President Bill Clinton was reported ready to veto the bill, which would require moving the embassy by May 31, 1999. The bill was due to be debated by the Senate on Friday. But several hours after the debate was to start, Mr. Dole announced it was off until Monday.

"We have been in negotiations... and negotiations are going on now with interested parties (and) representatives of the president," Mr. Dole said. He said he believed an agreement would be reached by Monday but that if there were no agreement he would bring the bill to the floor unchanged. Democratic leader Thomas Daschle earlier quoted Secretary of State Warren

Bosnian foes swap prisoners

SARAJEVO (R) — A local truce was reported to be holding in volatile northwest Bosnia on Saturday and the warring parties exchanged prisoners in further signs of progress towards ending 3½ years of war. Fighting has continued in the northwest since a Bosnia-wide ceasefire came into force nine days ago. The truce was aimed at calming the situation on the ground in preparation for peace talks scheduled to open in the United States on Oct. 31. "No significant military actions were detected by us in the northwest yesterday, just a few explosions," United Nations spokeswoman Major Miriam Sohacki said.

Referring to a meeting at northwest frontlines on Friday at which Serb, Croat and Muslim commanders agreed to respect the ceasefire, spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Chris Vernon said: "The general atmosphere of these meetings was one of cooperation and willingness to make the ceasefire work." In a further sign of progress towards peace, the Bosnian government and its separatist Serb foes exchanged 20 prisoners on Saturday, including two Turkish journalists and three foreign aid workers held by the Serbs. Among those freed in the exchange, the first since the ceasefire came into effect on Oct. 12, was Sarajevo poet Vladimir Sreboc, a Serb critic of the war who was seized by Serb soldiers when he ventured outside the city on a freelance peace mission in 1992.

A delegate from the International Committee of the Red Cross, which helped organise the swap, said it was not known how many others were being held. "There's going to be a lot of these over the next few weeks — both prisoners and bodies." Another sign of a return to normality in Sarajevo after 42 months of siege was the reopening of the city's main outdoor market, scene of two

Regent reviews summit facilities

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, the Regent, Saturday inspected preparations for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit which opens on Oct. 29 and expressed deep satisfaction with the progress of work. The Regent visited the Ministry of Interior, the Public Security Department (PSD), the Grand Palace Hotel and Palace of Culture at the Al Hussein Youth City. Praising the efforts of the concerned authorities involved in preparations, Prince Ra'd said he was certain that the finishing touches will be put well before the convening of the conference. Minister of Interior Salameh Hammad outlined



His Royal Highness Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, the Regent, on Saturday is briefed by officials on preparations for the Oct. 29-31 Middle East and North Africa economic summit (Petra photo)

Infant mortality mounts in Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — Child mortality in Iraq from diseases that could be related to U.N. sanctions has risen again this year, by 1.5 per cent to an average of 4,475 deaths a month, the Iraqi government says. But the rate of increase in the number of children under five who die of malnutrition, diarrhoea and acute respiratory infection is lower than the population growth rate for the first time since the Gulf crisis in 1990 and 1991. The statistics, from the Iraqi Ministry of Health, appear in a report prepared by the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) and made available to Reuters on Saturday. They show that child mortality from these diseases rose sharply in the first two years of sanctions, from 593 deaths a month in 1989 to 3,911 in 1992, then less rapidly to 4,147 in 1993, 4,409 in 1994 and 4,475 between January and July 1995.

RJ to fly home 14 Jordanians stranded aboard expellee ship

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter with agency dispatches
AMMAN — Royal Jordanian, the national carrier, will fly home 14 Jordanian nationals expelled by Libya and stranded aboard a ferry anchored off the port of Latakia in Cyprus, the government said Saturday. A government statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said Interior Minister Salameh Hammad had contacted the honorary consul of Jordan in Cyprus to make the necessary arrangements for the flight, paid for by the government. The move came upon the instructions of His Majesty King Hussein, the statement said. More than 650 people, the bulk of them Palestinians carrying Syrian-issued travel documents, are stuck aboard the car-ferry, Countess M,

after they were denied entry to Syria on Monday. Cyprus also refused them entry. Subsequently, Syria changed its mind and agreed to take in all those carrying Syrian documents — about 590 people. Among the rest are also Syrians, who are also expected to be taken home by Syria, and nationals of several other countries. Fourteen of them are Jordanian nationals. Jordan has said it would welcome back all Jordanian passport holders and would also facilitate the travel of Palestinians to the occupied territories through the Kingdom's territory if they held Israeli entry permits. Meanwhile, a Syrian boat which was supposed to have reached Latakia to pick up the stranded Palestinians was delayed by engine trouble, international agencies reported.

The Countess M arrived off Cyprus — filled with Palestinian workers, who had lost their jobs in Libya, and their families — after it was originally turned back by the authorities at the Syrian port of Latakia on Monday. It left Tripoli on Oct. 13 and has remained at Latakia since Tuesday amid intense negotiations between the Palestinian self-rule authority in Gaza and Syrian and Cypriot authorities aimed at solving the problem. The Syrian passenger boat coming to take those with the necessary paperwork, the 150-seat Fayza Express, left Latakia late Friday but engine problems reduced its speed and delayed its arrival in Latakia. Syria tries to make a point, but fails, page 2

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Hamas: No Cairo talks with PLO

AMMAN (Agencies) — The militant movement Hamas on Saturday denied it had received any formal offer to attend reconciliation talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Cairo.

A Hamas official in Gaza, who requested anonymity, said on Friday talks would be held in Cairo.

But Jordan-based Hamas spokesman Ibrahim Ghoshieh said Hamas, the PLO's main rival in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, would "study the invitation and clarify its stand" once it receives the offer.

The contradictory statements appeared to further signal a rift between Hamas' leaders on how to deal with the PLO.

"Once the movement is notified formally, it will clarify its stand on the dialogue with the Palestinian (National) Authority (PNA) and when it starts, it will start from zero, as there are no agreements, or draft agreements between the two," he told Reuters.

"Hamas' programme vis-a-vis that of the PNA will be put to the negotiating table... the movement will discuss every detail and hopes that the PNA will be ready for that," Mr. Tayeb Abdul Rahim, secretary-general of the PNA, said Friday Hamas had agreed to the talks, at Egypt's invitation, but had not set a date.

Hamas, which remains implacably opposed to Israel, has put the PLO in a critical situation in the past year by launching suicide bombings that killed scores of Israelis. PLO courts have sentenced Hamas members to long prison terms in Gaza.

But recently, both sides have been making noises about reconciliation.

The PLO has recently stepped up contacts with Hamas ahead of Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian towns.

Settler roads destroy Palestinian farmland

HALHOUL, Occupied West Bank (R) — Bulldozers hastily building roads for Jewish settlers before the Israeli army moves away from West Bank Palestinian population centres are eating up some of the best Arab farmland, Palestinians said.

Some 300 Palestinian farmers from the southern West Bank town of Halhoul performed Friday prayers at vineyards marked for destruction.

In the northern West Bank, Palestinians said Israeli bulldozers were uprooting centuries-old olive trees for the bypass roads.

"This road will destroy some of the best farmland in Halhoul. This will damage our economy and make many farmers landless," said Halhoul Mayor Mohammad Masbali during the Friday protest.

He said Israeli military authorities notified him of the decision to build a road for the tiny settlement of Karme Tsur and immediately went down to some of the town's choicest fields and marked 11.5 kilometres of them for clearing.

The Israeli army said it could not comment on the report and housing and building ministry officials were not available.

Under the self-rule agreement signed in Washington last month, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) agreed that Israel would build a network of bypass roads to enable the 140,000 Jewish settlers to reach Israel without going through Arab villages and towns.

Israeli bulldozers are racing to build the roads across the West Bank linking the nearly 140 Jewish settlements with Israel in time for a redeployment schedule set to start on Oct. 25 in Jenin and end in Hebron in March 1995.

The Jenin bypass road was completed this week.

Kuwait University students protest tear-gas attack

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Kuwait University students staged a sit-in Saturday to protest a tear-gas attack, which had disrupted victory celebrations by liberals who won student union elections.

Hundreds of students skipped classes and gathered at the college of administrative sciences, where the tear-gas canister exploded Wednesday causing eye irritations and respiratory problems for 54 students.

A 17-year-old old youth has been arrested on suspicion of the tear-gas attack, a newspaper reported.

The Interior Ministry declined to comment on the report in the English-language Arab Times.

A ministry spokesman said, investigations were continuing and witnesses were being questioned on the incident, which authorities have said, threatened the Gulf country's internal security.

Students were rushed to hospitals after unidentified youths threw a tear-gas bomb or bombs at a campus meeting of the secular "Democratic Centre" group.

The meeting was celebrating the group's victory for the fourth straight year in student union elections at the university's faculty of administrative sciences.

The university's influential pro-Muslim Brotherhood group, "Eitilafiyah," took second place. Sunni and Shi'ite Muslim traditionalist groups and an independent group all have a presence within the university.

The administrative sciences faculty is one of the few not controlled by Islamists. Islamist groups have controlled Kuwait University's umbrella students' union, and most of the affiliated faculty unions, for more than a decade.

The Democratic Centre in a statement attacked the tear-gas incident as a "savagery" attack on the student movement and national unity as a whole.

The Interior Ministry said on Thursday the attack "destabilises internal security and has a severe effect on the democratic process enjoyed by university students."

Saturday's sit-in was brief and peaceful. Students belonging to liberal group carried placards that said: "No for terrorism." "The shadow of extremism is looming over our society."

Islamic students took part in the sit-in Saturday. They denied it had carried out the attack, which they blamed on a "fifth column" seeking to damage Kuwait's national unity.

"No Islamist and no Kuwaiti could have done anything like this... accusations cannot be thrown around without proof," said Nasseebah Al Sumait, a 20-year-old accounting student who wore a flowing long dress and a head scarf in keeping with the Islamic dress code.

Muslim fundamentalists and their supporters occupy 19 seats in the 50-member Kuwaiti parliament. Although they have lost most of their battles for the implementation of Islamic law in the small state, they still enjoy widespread support.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Rebel soldiers to return to Yemen

ADEN (AP) — More than 100 rebel soldiers who fled to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) during last year's civil war will be returning home over the next few days. The government-run newspaper reported Saturday. The Arabic-language October 14 daily said the soldiers were southerners who fled when northern troops loyal to President Ali Abdullah Saleh crushed secessionists in the south in the two-month war that ended in July 1994. The newspaper did not disclose its sources, but said the soldiers had decided to return because they had come to realise the error of their ways. Several hundred rebel soldiers and officers have returned home from self-imposed exile in several Arab countries over the past few months, the paper said.

Syrians find ancient cemetery

DAMASCUS (AP) — Municipal workers laying new telephone lines in the central Syrian city of Homs have uncovered an ancient cemetery, the Al Baath daily reported Friday. The government-run newspaper said the cemetery contained five stone tombs dating back to 317-337 A.D. Al Baath said that the tombs, discovered at a depth of two metres in the city centre, contained golden ornaments belonging to "Prince Constantine," who lived during that period. It did not elaborate. But Syria at that time was under Roman rule.

Pollard group claims Israeli financing

TEL AVIV (AP) — The Israeli government, which had been at pains to disassociate itself from the Jonathan Pollard spy scandal, secretly funded a grass-roots group, Pollard said Friday. The group's chairman said that he had been lobbied for his release, the committee's chairman said Friday. "The time has come to say it," said Amnon Dror, chairman of the Public Committee for Jonathan Pollard. "For years we have received our funds from private and public sources and from the Israeli government. And I must say it has been very generous." Mr. Dror estimated that since the committee was formed nine years ago, the government has provided about \$3 million. The money was channelled through a government body which he would not name. He said Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and his predecessor Yitzhak Shamir, both approved the payments. A spokesman for Mr. Rabin, Yarden Vaitaki, said he did not know if the report was true and could not check it immediately because the prime minister and many of his staff members were currently in the United States. The television said the prime minister's bureau refused to comment, but sources close to the prime minister had confirmed the facts.

Hijacker to go on trial 11 years late

TEHRAN (AFP) — An Iranian arrested on charges of hijacking a passenger plane to Bahrain and Egypt 11 years ago is to stand trial in a revolutionary court, newspapers said Saturday. Gholamreza Vahidju is accused of having seized the plane while on a domestic flight in 1984 "with the help of a former military official," the head of Tehran revolutionary courts, Gholamhussein Rahbarpur, told the papers. The authorities said last month that the suspect was arrested on Sept. 20 as he tried to cross into Turkey. He is to go on trial soon, the papers said without giving a date. After the hijacking, he travelled from Egypt to France where he was granted asylum and support from the Iranian opposition, police said. He allegedly returned to Iran several months ago under a pseudonym.

Iraqis convicted of smuggling refugees

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Three men, two of them Iraqi natives, were convicted Friday of smuggling hundreds of refugees across the Baltic into Sweden in 1993 and 1994. They ran an operation that capitalised on the collapse of the Soviet bloc to ferry people from the Middle East and Asia through former Soviet republics into Europe, said the court in Gotland, an eastern Swedish island. "They had a brutal business and a pure mafia operation. This had nothing to do with idealism," Prosecutor Kjell Lillicholm told the Swedish news agency TT. They smuggled about 400 refugees in all kinds of boats into Sweden, the court said, TT reported. They charged roughly 3,000 kronor (\$440) for each adult refugee and about half for children. The three were convicted of violating Swedish immigration law and each face up to two years in jail. Their names were not disclosed under standard Swedish media practice. They were identified only as two Iraqis and another man of unknown origin.

Human Rights group accepts Turkish complaint

STRASBOURG (AFP) — The European Human Rights Commission Friday accepted a complaint against the Turkish government laid by the owners and editors of a Turkish newspaper that was forced to quit publication. The daily Ozgur Gundem was hit by bomb attacks and legal action, and its journalists were murdered or disappeared before it gave up in 1994 after two years of publication. The paper's owners submitted a long list of incidents blamed on the Turkish authorities, culminating in the destruction of its three main offices by bombs. As well as the murders and disappearances, journalists and other staff were also subjected to death threats, fines and confiscations of property. For Ankara, government officials said that Ozgur Gundem was a propaganda organ for the banned separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), and the state was justified in restricting freedom of expression in the interests of national security and territorial integrity. If the commission cannot achieve an amicable settlement in the case it will issue an opinion on whether Turkey has breached the European Human Rights Convention and could refer it to the human rights court.

Arafat, Orthodox community at odds with Deodoros I

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Yasser Arafat, has boycotted a ceremony in which the head of the Greek Orthodox Church of Jerusalem, Patriarch Deodoros I, presented peace prizes to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and his Foreign Minister Shimon Peres because the patriarch did not plan to present a similar prize to the PLO leader during the same ceremony in Jerusalem as agreed earlier.

Bashir Abu Hatab, director of Mr. Arafat's office, told Agence France Presse (AFP) that the patriarch had agreed to band the prize to Mr. Arafat's representative Al Tayeb Abdul Rahim at the same ceremony but changed his mind upon Israel's request and announced that the award to Mr. Arafat will be handed separately after the Rabin and Peres ceremony.

However, a spokesman for the patriarch said the prize will be handed to Mr. Arafat whenever that is convenient

to the PLO chief. Patriarch Deodoros I's decision to present the Israeli leaders with the peace prize, described to be the supreme award of the Jerusalem patriarchate, drew angry reaction from members of the Arab Orthodox community in the Kingdom who accused the patriarch of selling or leasing the Arab Orthodox community's property to Israel.

Fakhri Kawa, a prominent Jordanian writer and columnist and a former Parliament member, said that the patriarch had sold the land on which the Israeli parliament (the Knesset) was built. Describing the patriarch's prize to the Israeli leaders as a reward for their arbitrary actions in the occupied Arab lands and in Lebanon, Mr. Kawa, who is also secretary general of the Arab Writers Federation, said that the patriarch's behaviour "clearly reflects his failure to live up to and serve the aspirations of the Orthodox community in Palestine and Jordan."

Mr. Kawa urged all the Christian and religious organisations in Palestine and Jordan to stage what he called an "Arab Orthodox infidelity" and oust the Greek

leadership of the Arab church and substitute it with an Arab leadership.

Another Orthodox community member who originally comes from Jerusalem accused the patriarch of involving himself in temporal rather than spiritual matters and of abusing his authority as leader of the local church by presenting the prizes to the Israeli leaders.

Michael Sindaha said that in his capacity as leader of the church the patriarch has squandered the rights of the church and its property. He said the patriarch has presented peace awards to the Israelis "who have not restored peace to the region but continue to seize Arab and Orthodox-owned property like the St. John Hotel near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Mar Elias church land located between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the St. Georges Church in Jerusalem, which was demolished by the Israeli authorities, and continue to deny the Palestinian Arab members of the Orthodox community along with other Arabs, their request to return to their homeland in Palestine."

Rushdie struggles to win back normal life

OSLO (AP) — For an hour on Friday, Salman Rushdie escaped from what he called "the bad story" of his almost seven years in hiding and was just a writer, spinning a tale for his audience of about 600.

"I feel that for more than six years now I have been trapped in a bad story, a badly written, badly managed story... So I thought it was time for a good story," he said in his first announced appearance outside Britain since 1989.

Mr. Rushdie has lived in hiding since his book "The Satanic Verses" was declared blasphemous in 1989 by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah of Iran. Khomeini ordered the death of Mr. Rushdie and anyone connected with the book.

The 48-year-old writer would sometimes appear unannounced at events, including several in Scandinavia.

Last month, he began announcing his appearances publicly in advance, with two in Britain and the third in Oslo to promote his new book, "The Moor's Last Sigh."

The British-Indian writer briefly shared the stage with William S. Burroughs, who was shot and severely wounded in Oslo three years ago, probably because he published the Norwegian-language edition of "The Satanic Verses" in 1989.

"I want to thank all of you because I have felt enormous warmth and support from the people of Norway. And after everything that has happened here I feel particularly delighted to come to this country," said Mr. Rushdie.

"Let me put it this way, it almost feels that 'jeg er nordmann' (I am Norwegian)," said Mr. Rushdie.

Syria tries to make a point, but fails badly

From Michael Jansen in Nicosia

SYRIA HAS managed to put itself more in the wrong, on the local level with Cypriot authorities, the Palestinians and the Arabs, than Libya over the 660 "boat people" who remained stranded on a ferry, off the southern Cypriot coast on Saturday.

The saga began on Monday when the ship Countess M, docked at Latakia but the passengers were turned back by Syrian immigration officials who did not even examine their papers. The feeling among Arab diplomats in Nicosia is that Damascus had issued a blanket instruction to the port authorities to deny entry to all passengers coming from Libya.

This command would have been issued on presumption that such passengers would be Palestinians expelled in disorderly fashion by the Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi in accordance with his September decision to force all Palestinians to leave his country in order to demonstrate to the world that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) had not provided

these people with a homeland to which they could go.

However, the passengers aboard the Countess M were not all Palestinians, though the majority were; 82 were Syrians carrying Syrian passports and there were 14 Jordanians and 10 Lebanese and several other Arabs who normally do not need a visa to enter Syria. Although they were doing so in the normal fashion and were not being deported. They all had documents, which would ordinarily entitle them free entry to Syria. The ship's captain (and the Palestinian embassy in Tripoli) said prior permission had been given by the Syrian authorities at Latakia to dock at the port and discharge all the passengers. Those without Syrian papers, Fayez Younis of the Palestinian embassy told the Jordan Times, had consulted the Syrian embassy at Tripoli and been told "no problem."

In spite of all these facts, the passengers were compelled to reboard the ship which then sailed to the nearby port of Larnaca in Cyprus, where it is registered. The ship has remained in place at anchor-

age since Tuesday afternoon with food, medicines and fresh water being supplied by the Cypriot authorities. "Blind obedience" to a blanket order is the only explanation for the Syrian decision, Mr. Younis asserted.

But this decision has complicated the whole Syrian response to this problem. On Wednesday the Syrian charge d'affaires in Nicosia stated that the Syrian passengers and Palestinians holding Syrian travel documents, 590 persons, would be accepted by Syria. A small Syrian ship was due at Larnaca on Friday to collect about half but this was postponed till Saturday and, because of engine trouble on the high seas, till Sunday.

ANALYSIS

The most sensible thing for Latakia, or Damascus, to do would have been to ask the captain of the Countess M to sail back to Latakia and discharge its passengers. But whoever, in Latakia or Damascus, took the blanket decision or applied it to the passengers of the Countess M was not to be criticised or coun-

tered or forced to change his mind and called to account for the mistake. Although decision-makers in countries where there is little or no accountability often take wrong turnings, this is rare in Syria where most decisions are slow in coming because of careful, discreet consideration. This is why Damascus has developed a reputation for political astuteness.

Palestinian sources say that Syria has adopted the line of hanning deportees from Libya to drive home the point made by Colonel Qaddafi that the peace process has not given the Palestinians a homeland and to make the point that the PLO should not have signed a separate deal with Israel, in violation of understandings with Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, that there should be cooperation and coordination in the negotiations. On this issue, the Syrians have a point, but, as Palestinians, sources contend, the deed is done and it is too late for retribution, particularly if the retribution is blind and harms the country seeking 'redress' — in this case Syria — more than it harms its target — the PLO.

The real damage Syria's

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:00 The Flintstones
14:30 Joshua Jones
14:45 Family Playhouse
15:00 Scientific Eye
15:30 Pugsley's Summer
16:00 I Love Lucy
16:30 Tarzan
17:00 Children's Programme — Cocotte Minute

17:30 Serie — Fruits Et Legumes
18:00 Document
19:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine — Sports Et Musique
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Nurses
20:00 Cinema, Cinema
20:25 The Bold and the Beautiful
21:10 Heartbeat
21:45 Doc — Futures
22:00 News in English
22:25 Counterstrike
23:10 Cassidy
00:30 Keeping Up Appearances

PRAYER TIMES

04:22 Fajr
05:40 Sunrise (Samra) Dubai
11:20 Dhuhr
14:31 Asr
17:01 Maghrib
18:18 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Switzerland, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624390
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De La Salle Church Tel. 661787
The Lutheran Church Tel. 622464
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 652626
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Church Tel. 845457
The Lutheran Church Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Relative cool weather conditions will prevail with skies partly cloudy and winds northerly to moderate. In Amman, it will be fine with winds

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min/Max. temp. 12/22
Amman 18 / 29
Aqaba 18 / 29
Dorcas 10 / 26
Jordan Valley 18 / 29

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 22, Aqaba 29. Humidity readings: Amman 43 per cent. Aqaba 47 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhlis Masabrah 620425
Dr. Jusu's Abu Dabbab 738848
Dr. Walid Al Masri 675485
Dr. Yousef Rashid 896301
Firas pharmacy 661912
Firdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asana pharmacy 637035
Nisrallah pharmacy 626772
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shimouni pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ali Al Omari 272032
Alquds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Yousef Abu Sa'id 989000
Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630241
Rescue 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 845402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 661101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 635381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int'l Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 6442816
Al-Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 6424112
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmouni 607071
Shmouni Hospital 845845
University Hospital 6672219
Al-Muassat Hospital 66612737
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajir 7711015
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 7751126
Army, Marj 8916115
Queen Alia Hospital 60224030
Amal Hospital 607125
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)987532
Jbn Sina Hospital (09)987532
Al-Hikma Modern Hospital (09)987532
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 867199

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

04:30 Bangkok (RJ)
05:30 Beirut (RJ)
06:30 Jeddah (RJ)
06:55 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:10 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
09:25 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:30 Paris (add) (RJ)
15:55 Brussels (RJ)
16:45 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
17:00 London (RJ)
18:00 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:15 Athens (RJ)
19:40 Rome (RJ)
19:40 Vienna (RJ)

IRBID:
Princess Rama Hospital (02)75555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)72225
Ibn Al-Nafis Hospital (02)74700
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)14111

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

10:30 Sana'a (RJ)
12:40 Bahrain, Sharjah (GF)
12:40 Moscow (GF)
15:15 Rome, Damascus (AZ)
19:35 Cairo (MS)
20:10 Beirut, ME (RJ)
21:20 London, Beirut (BA)
22:30 Istanbul (TK)
06:25 Athens (OKA)
01:20 Amsterdam (KL)
01:20 London (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:30 Aqaba (RJ)
05:40 Beirut (RJ)
06:30 Aqaba, Frankfurt (RJ)
10:30 Vienna, Munich (RJ)
11:00 Aqaba, Vienna (RJ)
11:10 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
11:15 Rome (RJ)
11:40 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:25 Athens (RJ)
Frankfurt, Vienna (add) (RJ)
Jeddah (RJ)
New Delhi (RJ)
Damascus (RJ)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fil per kg.

Apple 700 / 500
Banana 400
Banana (Mukammal) 620
Cabbage 210 / 150
Carrot 450/300
Cauliflower 300/200
Cucumbers (large) 250 / 150
Cucumbers (small) 400 / 300
Eggplant 250 / 150
Garlic 750/600
Grapes 650/450
Grape Fruit 250/140
Lemon 270/170
Marrow (large) 170 / 100
Marrow (small) 250 / 180
Olives (green) 380/280
Onion (dry) 250 / 150
Pepper (hot) 220 / 100
Pepper (sweet) 220/100
Pomegranate 300/200
Potato 200 / 220

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smuggling refugees

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MARKET PRICES

Other flights (Terminal 2)

MARKET PRICES



Her Majesty Queen Noor meets with U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali at the United Nations headquarters in New York where they launched the International Leadership Academy (AFP photo)

Queen, Boutros Ghali launch International Leadership Academy

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor and Secretary General Boutros Ghali Friday launched the United Nations University International Leadership Academy (UNU/ILA) at the U.N. headquarters in New York on the occasion of the U.N.'s 50th anniversary, a Royal Court statement said.

The UNU/ILA, which will be based in Amman, will be the first global leadership training facility as well as the first U.N. institution to be initiated and established in the Middle East, the statement said.

In her remarks, Queen Noor, the chairperson of the UNU/ILA's Advisory Committee, described the academy as "a unique leadership initiative to promote and reinforce tolerance, cooperation, equitable human development and the resolution of conflicts through negotiation, dialogue and justice," the statement said.

She added that it will bring together and nurture ties of friendship, understanding and solidarity among future leaders, who will work on promoting peace, stability and furthering the endeavours of the U.N., it said.

According to the statement, the Queen praised former Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali as the initiator of this venture "whose vision and persistence have brought it to fruition."

The University of Jordan has donated the use of its facilities and premises to establish the temporary headquarters of the academy, whose first annual session will begin next summer.

The session will include workshops and interactive discussions between distinguished keynote speakers and 50 participants — "fellows" selected from 5 continents — on peace and security, leadership and civil society, sustainable development, global economics, culture and religion; the programme will also include one week of travel in the region.

Attending the ceremony with Queen Noor were Rector of the United Nations University (UNU) Heitor de Souza, Advisor to the Rector Dr. Majali, Vice President of the UNU/ILA and Japan's Permanent Representative to the U.N. Ambassador Hisashi Owada, Queen Noor's Education Advisor Munther Masri and Queen Noor's Liaison Officer for UNU/ILA Basma Lawzi, according to the statement.

Earlier that day the Queen chaired a meeting of the Advisory Committee at the U.N.'s North American Office to discuss the plans for the establishment of the academy. The day's events concluded with a working lunch at Ambassador Owada's residence, the statement said.

Jordan releases first compact disc on tourism information ahead of MENA

By Cathy King
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The first compact disc containing detailed tourist information, photographs and videos on Jordan has just been completed in time for next week's Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit.

The brain-child of Her Royal Highness Princess Zein Bint Al Hussein, work on the project began a year ago with the intention of creating a portable, comprehensive guide to Jordan to assist in the promotion of Jordan as a tourist destination.

"It was an obvious need and no one seemed to have the capability to develop a project of this kind," said Princess Zein in a recent interview.

"The country's natural resources are few, so we have to make the most out of tourism. But we want it to be done with class and not for it to destroy Jordan," she said, adding, "we don't want to bite the hand that feeds us."

Having seen computer-generated, tourism-related programmes elsewhere, Princess Zein initiated the project and worked with the Royal Court Computer Department to produce the CD.

"The project could not have been achieved without the assistance of His Majesty, who bought all the (CD) production machines and touch-tone screens, or without the guys in the computer department," Princess Zein told the Jordan Times.

Other equipment necessary for the project was already available in the

department. The touch-tone screens were purchased especially for the summit, but the programme was created more specifically for mouse-directed computers.

The programme is data-based and includes a multi-media function which allows for audio-visual options such as photographs, videos and music.

Similar to a guide-book, the programme is divided into sections: the Hashemites; history; general facts and information; getting to Jordan; listings of embassies, airlines, hotels and restaurants; the environment; commerce and investment; system of government; in addition to information on cities and sites.

The section on cities and sites is illustrated with photographs and/or videos.

A "quick tour" section groups together places of interest, which may be reached in a single day, and are exhibited in a series of fast-moving videos and accompanying music.

"Most of the data was collected from within the office, but we also received help and information from various institutions throughout the Kingdom," noted Princess Zein, who added that because of the nature of the programme it can be tailor-made, or adapted, to a specific occasion, and the data can be updated regularly.

This initial version includes the text of the newly passed Investment Law, descriptions of the Amman Chambers of Commerce and Industry and detailed information on the economy.

In that respect, said



Scenes from Jordan illustrate one side of the Guide to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan compact disc

Princess Zein, the first version was "tailor-made" for the MENA summit; such information would be of little interest to the general tourist, she added.

In addition, the programme can be modified for whatever "summit or festival that Jordan may be participating in worldwide," and because it is recorded on CD, it is very portable, Princess Zein explained.

The CD is available free of charge, said the Princess, adding that it was developed with "little cost incurred" and will also be distributed to all of Jordan's embassies and the Jordan Information Bureaus in

Washington and London, as well as to all airlines flying in and out of the Kingdom.

The Princess stressed that producing the CD was intended as an effort to help boost tourism to the country.

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Tourism tendered a project to the private sector to develop a multi-media based programme also about Jordan.

"The ministry knew all along that we were doing this project, but still went ahead with the tender. It seems pointless to have duplicated it," stated Princess Zein.

The project tendered by the Ministry of Tourism

was another of the preparations for MENA, but rather than being available on CD, the programme is accessed through a touch-tone screen.

Princess Zein recognises that Jordan has much to offer a tourist, but few know of its potential as a holiday destination. The CD will allow for the dissemination of such information easily.

"Even if someone wants it for personal interest, they are free to take it. It would be to our benefit if it is then shown to friends and family," she said.

The CD will be available upon request at the various conference venues.

ICARDA to hold regional symposium

AMMAN (J.T.) — The International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), will organise a symposium on Integrated Crop-Livestock Systems in the Dry Areas of West Asia and North Africa, in Amman from Nov. 6-8, an ICARDA statement said Saturday.

The symposium will review and discuss research results obtained by scientists from West Asia and North Africa, working on the improvement of dryland production systems, the

statement said.

Both basic and applied research will be addressed and multidisciplinary research efforts will be emphasised, it said.

According to ICARDA, the symposium will cover the following areas:

1. Improvement of barley and forage crops production.
2. Improvement of small ruminant production and management.
3. Marginal lands and rangelands improvement.
4. Technology assessment and transfer.

Around one hundred scientists from twelve countries are expected to present and discuss about 70 scientific papers during the three days of the symposium, the statement said.

The countries expected to participate in the conference are: Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Spain, Iran, Turkey, Cyprus and Egypt in addition to several international organisations and universities, it said.

Wall collapses killing construction worker

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — One person was killed and another was seriously injured Saturday when a supporting wall of a building under construction collapsed burying the men under dirt and bricks in Wadi Saqra, police and Civil Defence Department (CDD) officials said.

The two workers, an Egyptian and a Jordanian were sitting and working beside the 20 x 6-metre wall when it collapsed.

"They vanished under the rubble and dust," an eye-

witness told the Jordan Times. The witness said there were other workers in the area but that none of them was injured.

A large crowd watched as CDD rescue teams located the two victims and pulled them from under the rubble after nearly an hour.

A CDD official told the Jordan Times Saturday that there was not enough support in the foundation and that is why the wall collapsed.

"It is the contractors fault for not being more careful in choosing the place and

testing the kind of soil before building," the official said adding that this is not the first time such an accident occurs.

The names of the victims were not immediately available.

According to confirmed sources, police are questioning several people in charge of the sight including the engineer and the contractor. Police declined to release any further details except to say they were investigating the incident.



Civil Defence Department rescue workers carry one of two victims of a construction site accident to an ambulance in the Wadi Saqra area. The other victim was killed when a wall collapsed burying the two workers underneath (CDD photo)

Brother arrested for killing sister in latest 'crime of honour'

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A 19-year-old Tafleeh woman Friday was shot and killed by her older brother for alleged adultery in Al Rewid town, according to confirmed sources.

The sources said that Maysoun Mohammad was shot three times in abdomen by her brother Ali, 30, who surrendered to police immediately following the incident.

The sources said that Ali was urged by his family to kill his sister after the family suspected that their daughter was having an affair with a man.

The source added that the victim was shot at 11:00 p.m. while she was at home.

Maysoun, who was in coma and was bleeding heavily, was rushed to Prince Zaid Hospital, died shortly after arriving to the hospital.

Police contacted by the Jordan Times Saturday confirmed the incident but refused to release any details.

Maysoun became the seventh woman reportedly killed in the Kingdom in a "crime of honour" this year.

Also Friday, in north Azraq, police were investigating the death of a 60-

year-old man who's deteriorating body was discovered by the authorities on Friday, confirmed sources said. According to the source, the victim, identified as Said Abdul Rahman, was reported missing for more than 10 days.

Police Saturday declined to reveal any information and said that they were investigating the incident.

Meanwhile, the Criminal Court Saturday sentenced Mustafa Deeb, 65, to five years with hard labour for molesting Amari M., 11, last June in his shop in Ruseifa.

Court documents said that the victim went to the

accused's shop to buy some groceries.

Deeb was sleeping at the time, and when he saw the child he asked her to go behind the counter and he molested her, and asked her not to tell anyone, the court documents said. The child went home and told her family about the incident, and the man was arrested by the authorities the same day. According to the document, in his confession Deeb told the police that he was dreaming of a woman and when he woke up he saw the child in front of him and could not help but molest her.

Under the Patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor

Bani Hamida 10th Anniversary "Winds of Change"

Enjoy the Bani Hamida Women's fine achieved works

• rugs • cushions • runners • wallhangings

Annual Fall Exhibition

26 October - 5 November

10:00 am - 9:00 pm

Sponsorship & Location:

Jerusalem Insurance Company

Shmeisani - Abdul Hamid Sharaf St.

Opposite Air France Tel. 658696

In cooperation with:

Bdour & Shawwa Gallery

Excellence

Greenhouse Jordan

Modern House

Noor Engineering

Span Marketing (Sanderson)

FILM
"Count Dracula" at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

"Paintings by Janet Vertu-Brown at Alia Art Gallery, First Circle.

Chechenya peace talks to resume after 2-week break

MOSCOW (AFP) — Peace talks between Moscow and Chechen separatists will resume in the Chechen capital Grozny next Tuesday after a two-week suspension, Vyacheslav Mikhailov, head of the Russian delegation said Saturday.

He was quoted by the ITAR-TASS news agency.

The talks were suspended on Oct. 9 after Anatoly Romanov, the commander of the Russian forces in the tiny Muslim Caucasus republic, was seriously injured in an assassination attempt and dozens of Chechens died in subsequent air raids on villages. Russia has denied responsibility for the bombings.

Mr. Mikhailov, who is Russian nationalities minister, and Oleg Lobov, Russian President Boris Yeltsin's special envoy for Chechenya, arrived in Grozny Friday.

Russian troops confirmed

Saturday that an artillery attack the previous night on the village of Rostni-Chu, southwest of Grozny, — blamed by the Chechens on the Russians — killed three people and injured two.

An air raid on the village on Oct. 8 killed 28 people and injured another 60, Chechen sources claimed.

The following day the Russian high command acknowledged that there had been a bombing raid but denied responsibility for it.

The atmosphere in Grozny became more tense during the night with the arrival of the Russian delegation.

At least six Russian military helicopters flew over the capital. The Russian Interfax News Agency reported Russian military sources as saying that firing could be heard in parts of the city centre where buildings belonging to Russian federal organisations and

the pro-Russian Chechen government are situated.

Negotiations on implementing a July 30 accord on disarmament had been advancing painfully slowly even before they were suspended.

The agreement was designed to end bitter fighting in Chechenya since Russian troops marched into the Caucasus republic in December to quell a three-year-old independence drive. At least 30,000 people, most of them civilians, have died in the conflict.

Earlier Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev had said he had reason to believe that rebels in Chechenya were planning broad-scale military action, Interfax reported.

Gen. Grachev, who was speaking on Moscow Television, said these "illegal armed bands" now numbered around 6,000 people,

including 350 mercenaries from outside the former Soviet Union.

He said information reaching the Defence Ministry proved that mercenaries from the Commonwealth of Independent States were also joining the Chechen forces, which were still managing to acquire military arms and equipment.

"This gave reason to believe that the irreconcilables were preparing to launch wide-scale military actions," Interfax quoted Gen. Grachev as saying during the television discussion.

He said that, while he supported peace talks with Chechen representatives he favoured the use of military force against rebels who continued to fire on Russian troops in the breakaway republic.

Austrian far right party says immigrants should go home

VIENNA (R) — Far-right leader Joerg Haider told Austrians Friday immigrants should be re-united with their families back home, while conservatives warned of economic belt-tightening after December's general election.

Mr. Haider described himself as Austria's "patron saint" against further immigration — a platform he adopted during elections a year ago when he won nearly a quarter of votes.

"We support family reunification for immigrants — but in the immigrant's home country and not in Austria," he told an election campaign news conference.

Polls show Mr. Haider's Freedom Party drawing level with the traditional giants of Austrian politics — the left-wing Social Democrats (SPOE) and the Conservative People's Party (OEVP) whose coalition fell apart last week after a budget row.

Launching his party's manifesto, the OEVP leader, Vice Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel, painted a gloomy picture of Austria's future unless it shed its pricey welfare cocoon in favour of economic reform.

"We are no longer willing

to put a nice gloss on things. We are going to speak the truth," he told a news conference.

He said Austria's eight million people had to face stark choices but the country could solve its economic deficit problem "if we all can face up to the unvarnished truth...and if we all tighten our belts a little."

Mr. Schuessel fell out with Social Democrat Chancellor Franz Vranitzky in a protracted dispute on how to cut the huge 1996 state budget deficit. Mr. Schuessel favoured sharp reductions in public spending while Mr. Vranitzky argued for tax rises.

The two parties have governed together for the past decade, presenting little radical choice to voters at election time, but their tacit pact appears to be over.

Mr. Vranitzky said his former partner was on an "ego trip" and vowed that the "necessary reforms and structural changes will be carried out with social justice." He pledged to protect society's weak, old and poor.

Mr. Haider has branded both parties as liars and has long vowed to smash Austria's post-World War II "grand coalition" political

system which he describes as putrid with corruption and nepotism.

In the last year's election, Mr. Haider's party won 42 seats in the 183-member parliament, making it the most powerful far-right party in the European Union. The SPOE and OEVP both recorded their worst showings since 1945.

As the election campaign got under way Monday, two more letter bombs exploded, injuring a Syrian-born doctor and a 71-year-old refugee counsellor.

Police acknowledge they are no closer to finding suspected neo-Nazi extremists believed to be behind a series of letter bomb blasts.

Austria's army was dragged into the fray Friday when the Neue Kronen Zeitung daily alleged links between military intelligence and a rightwing extremist group.

Army chief of staff Karl Majcen expressed outrage at the allegations and said accusations implicating the military in the activities of the so-called "Bajuwarschen Befreiungsarmee" (Bavarian Liberation Army) were totally groundless.

Grachev makes up with top-selling newspaper

MOSCOW (AP) — A top-selling Russian newspaper has made peace with Defence Minister Pavel Grachev whom it earlier accused of involvement in the bomb assassination of its reporter and corruption.

"Only the court can decide who is a thief and who is a murderer," Pavel Gusev, editor-in-chief of the daily Moskovsky Komsomolets, said on the Moscow Television channel.

A beaming Grachev, sitting across from Mr. Gusev, rolled up his eyes and gave a wide grin when the bearded editor told him the reason for the minister's libel suit against the newspaper was only "a little" twist of words.

The minister, in turn, retreated from his customary attacks on the media, saying that journalists were not to blame for the decline in army's prestige.

The scandal began a year ago when a Moskovsky Komsomolets investigative reporter, Dmitry Kholodov, died in a bomb blast at the newspaper's editorial offices. A female colleague of Kholodov was injured.

The newspaper said the 27-year-old reporter was killed for investigating military corruption, and accused Gen. Grachev and senior army brass. Gen. Grachev has blamed everyone from criminals to Kholodov himself.

The killing remains unsolved despite a wave of conjecture.

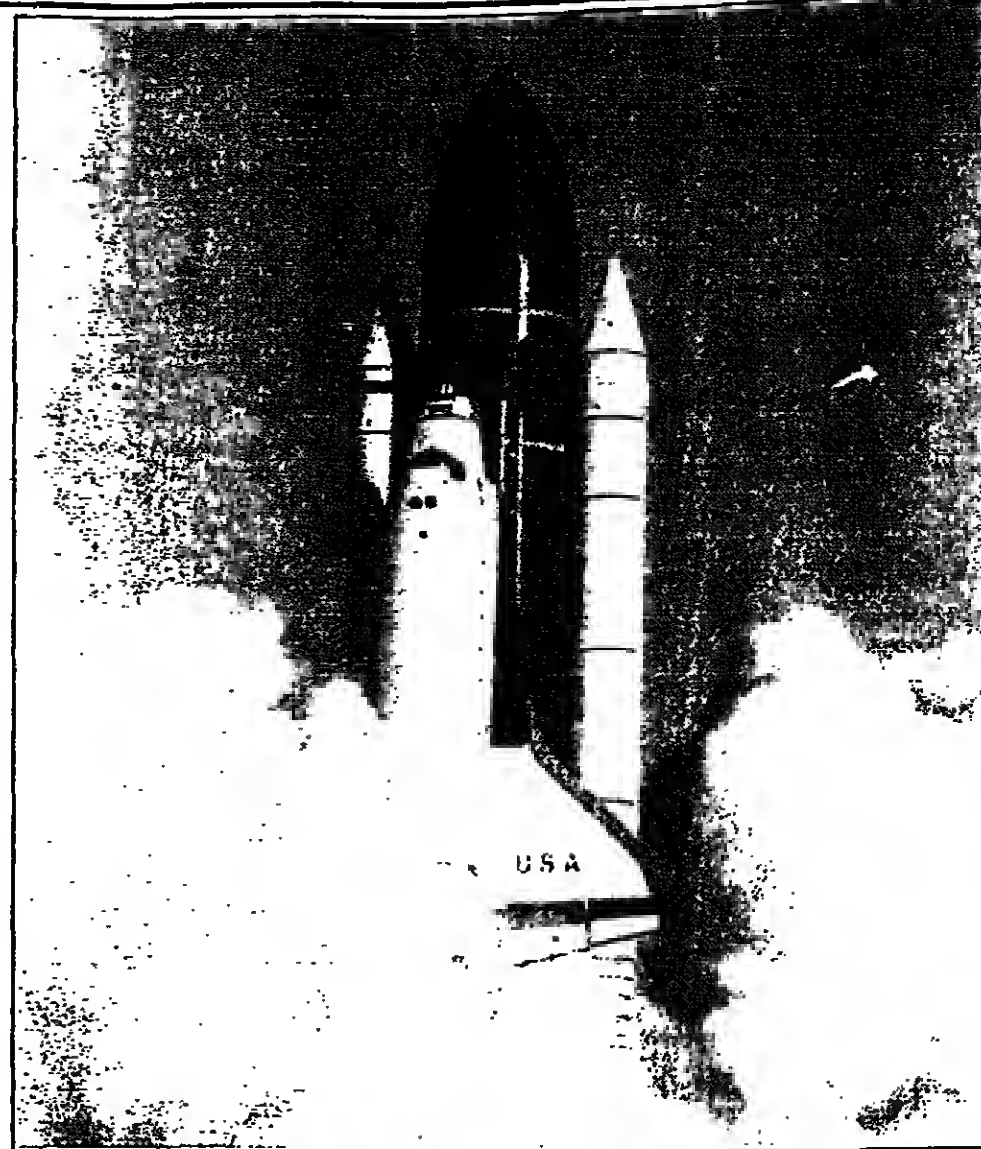
For instance, unnamed counter-intelligence agents have accused their rivals at GRU, the military intelligence, who themselves have pointed at foreign espionage services.

Russia's acting prosecutor general, Oleg Gaidarov, claims a breakthrough in the case, achieved with the help of U.S. and Israeli secret services, but hints that the main suspects were outside Russia and beyond investigators' reach for the moment.

Mr. Gusev said he was convinced that Gen. Grachev was innocent, although the trail led to the military establishment.

"I want to ask you to forgive me. A year ago I emotionally accused the defence minister of being linked to the killing of Dmitry Kholodov," Mr. Gusev said, according to the ITAR-TASS news agency.

The rapprochement came in the midst of a trial in Gen. Grachev's libel case against the newspaper.



The space shuttle Columbia leaves her launch pad at Kennedy Space Centre on her way into orbit (AFP photo)

Shuttle launched successfully on 7th try

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (R) — Space shuttle Columbia finally blasted off Friday after six abortive attempts to begin its 16-day scientific research mission in the near weightless environment of space.

An hour before blast-off at 9:53 a.m. EDT (1353 GMT), the launch was threatened by rain and low-lying clouds, but just three minutes after the first available blast-off time slides cleared and the shuttle was off with a thunderous roar.

NASA officials were in obvious good spirits after the blast-off. "The launch team really did an outstanding job today," said Kennedy Space Centre Launch Director Jim Harrington.

By early afternoon, the seven astronauts were activating the microgravity laboratory on board and three astronauts on the graveyard shift were preparing to go to bed.

NASA officials had looked grim since Sept. 28, when Columbia was first set to blast off. The shuttle had tied its own record with six delayed flights, four caused by mechanical problems and two by weather.

NASA officials said they felt no pressure to launch the shuttle Friday to prevent a record-setting seventh delay. The six delays have cost more than \$2 million,

NASA officials said a week ago.

The seven astronauts will use a \$101-million laboratory on board to conduct experiments that NASA scientists say will lead to development of better semiconductors, drugs, fire-fighting techniques and foods for use in space.

Columbia's liftoff cleared the way for a Nov. 11 launch of Atlantis on a high-profile mission to link with the Russian space station Mir. Atlantis was first set to blast off on Nov. 1 but Columbia's delays pushed it back by more than a week.

On board Columbia are two veteran and five rookie astronauts, including Madrid-born Michael Lopez-Alegria. Columbia is set to return at 6:45 a.m. (1045 GMT) on Nov. 5.

The U.S. Microgravity Laboratory on the shuttle is ideal for many experiments because gravity on Earth can mask the behaviour of scientific phenomena under study, NASA said.

Along with the high-tech equipments, 10 potato plants will be part of a study on starch in space. Scientist Raymond Bula said starch produced by potatoes could be a source of energy on space missions but there are signs that they do not accumulate as much starch in space as on Earth.

Russian, German take walk in space

Meanwhile a Russian cosmonaut and his German counterpart went outside the Mir space station Friday for a five-hour spacewalk to mount scientific equipment on a station module.

Sergei Avdeyev and Thomas Reiter left the spacecraft at 2:55 Moscow time (1155 GMT), and spent 5 hours and 16 minutes in open space, the ITAR-TASS news agency said.

They placed a pack of European scientific equipment on the Spektr module and replaced cassettes on a Russian-Swiss device designed to study the isotope content of interstellar matter.

Mission Commander Yuri Gidzenko controlled the station and maintained a radio link with the two, ITAR-TASS said.

Avdeyev, Reiter and Gidzenko are taking part in a mission designed to train Europeans for work on the future international space station Alpha.

The four-month mission has been extended by more than a month because of a shortage of funds to build the rocket booster for the spacecraft taking up a replacement crew.

U.N. birthday party turns New York upside down

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The United Nations is set to celebrate its 50th anniversary this weekend with a diplomatic extravaganza that is turning New York inside out.

Kings, presidents and prime ministers from more than 150 member states are converging on the city, turning it into the world's diplomatic and political capital.

The celebrations come at a time when the United Nations is experiencing the worst financial crisis since it was formed after the World War II, owed \$3.7 billion by members for its regular budget and peace-keeping.

Of the 15 countries that pay more than 80 per cent of the budget, the United States owes the most, \$1.4 billion, followed by Russia with about \$500,000 and the Ukraine with about \$238,000.

New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani is hosting gala events for the leaders Saturday before they begin their speeches the next day. Each address is supposed to last only five minutes, which would be a record in brevity for any of the leaders.

But if everyone speaks only two minutes longer, General Assembly President Freitas Do Amaral said, "we would

have an extra 6 1/2 hours worth of speeches."

Guests range from President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin to His Majesty King Hussein, The kings of Morocco and Swaziland, the prime ministers of China, Britain, France and Japan and the two captains regent of tiny San Marino.

Cuban President Fidel Castro is also coming — but both Mr. Giuliani and Mr. Clinton have excluded him from their respective dinners for the world leaders.

But he will not be lonely. Cuba's mission to the United Nations is deluged with invitations from every conceivable group, including Catholic leaders and business executives, and thousands of requests for interviews from the press.

"You just would not believe it," one envoy told Reuters.

Not coming to New York by their own choice are the heads of state of Iraq, Libya, North Korea and Iran, countries either subject to U.N. sanctions or with rocky relations with the United States, or both.

The only European country whose leader appears to have snubbed the event is Germany, despite Bonn's quest for a seat on the 15-nation U.N. Security Council.

Helmut Kohl is sending his foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel.

Much of the political action will take place beyond the confines of the cavernous U.N. General Assembly hall.

Mr. Clinton has separate meetings scheduled with Mr. Yeltsin and China's Jiang Zemin.

French President Jacques Chirac is due to confer with Algerian President Liamine Zerroual against the background of a bombing campaign in France by Algerian Islamic extremists who threaten even worse if the meeting is held.

British Prime Minister John Major and Argentine President Carlos Menem are expected to hold the highest-level encounter between leaders of their countries since they went to war over the Falkland Islands in 1982.

The gathering is the biggest get-together in diplomatic history, eclipsing the 15th General Assembly session in 1960, which entered U.N. folklore mainly due to the shoe-banging antics of then Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.

Back then, the United Nations had about 100 members, compared with 185 today, and security was much more relaxed.

Russian helicopter survivors found

MOSCOW (R) — Rescue teams searching for a Russian military helicopter missing in the arctic with 13 people on board found 18 survivors and four bodies Saturday, the Emergencies Ministry said.

A spokeswoman said eight of the survivors were injured. One of those aboard when the craft went missing Thursday appeared still to be unaccounted for.

The spokeswoman said the survivors and their tents had been spotted on Bolshevik Island by a helicopter which took off from the icebreaker Sovyetsky Soyuz.

She said it would take several hours to evacuate the survivors and the dead, first to a military base and then to the town of Vorkuta. The rescue teams were out of contact for the moment.

"The MI-26 helicopter disappeared inside the Arctic Circle, carrying a crew of six and 12 border guards. Border forces launched a search and rescue mission using three planes, three helicopters and a nuclear-powered icebreaker.

Russian Border Forces Commander Andrei Nikolayev cut short an official visit to the United States to coordinate the search. ITAR-TASS news agency said his first deputy was in charge of the operation on the spot.

The helicopter, operated by the Russian Arctic Border Force, last made contact while flying over an island in the Kara Sea in the direction of Sredny Island Thursday night.

India eyes permanent U.N. council seat

NEW DELHI (R) — India wants to join the United Nations Security Council as a permanent member and is actively campaigning to expand the 15-member body, the Foreign Ministry's official spokesman said Saturday.

"We feel that given our size and all that we merit a place," Arif Khan told Reuters in response to a report that Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao would formally seek India's membership when he addresses the General Assembly Tuesday.

"We want it expanded," Mr. Khan said. "Nobody seeks a formal seat. There is no such thing as formally seeking a membership."

India wants to join the Security Council because of the role it has played to achieve the objectives of the United Nations, Mr. Khan said.

India has been actively seeking to join the five permanent members of the Security Council — the United States, China, Russia, Britain and France — through subtle lobbying centred on its military support for the international organisation.

Indian soldiers have been part of recent U.N. peace-keeping operations in Somalia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

Mr. Rao made an unusual nationwide address on television last year to mark the

beginning of the U.N.'s 50th anniversary celebrations, peaking next week in New York.

"Negotiations are on to expand the Council," Mr. Khan said. "Then there will be negotiations to determine which are the countries (which will join it)."

He said Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee spoke strongly for an expansion of the council when he addressed the General Assembly last month.

"Negotiations on the number of seats is not complete. But we have expressed a clear desire to join," Mr. Khan said.

Former U.S. House press aide held in bank heist

WASHINGTON (R) — A former press secretary to two Republican congressmen has been arrested on bank robbery charges, the Justice Department said Thursday. FBI agents arrested Thomas Springer, 46, at his home in Silver Spring, Maryland, a suburb of Washington. Mr. Springer, who had worked as press secretary for representatives Michael Forbes, a New York Republican, and Toby Roth, a Wisconsin Republican, is charged with robbing a bank in Vienna, Virginia, another Washington suburb, on Oct. 18.

Stuck up burglar creates a stink

ALENCON, France (AFP) — A couple discovered the body of a burglar stuck up their chimney after noticing "a strange smell" nine months after a mysterious failed break-in, police said Tuesday. The couple did not immediately connect the smell with a shoe found in front of their fireplace in July 1993, at their second home in Saint-Aubert-Sur-Orne, western France. It was only when they came to have their chimney cleaned the following April that they found the cause of the stink, identified as burglar Karim Benfrid.

Police Tuesday said they were shelving the case, after failing to determine how he came to be there. The main theory was that one or more colleagues left him there after he became stuck, and did not return.

Britons face 'obesity explosion'

LONDON (AFP) — Britain faces an "obesity explosion" by the start of the next century mainly because of insufficient exercise, the Health Ministry warned. "The main reason for the increase in obesity is likely to be because people are less physically active rather than because they are eating more," said the report entitled Nutrition And Physical Activity. If eating habits and exercise patterns do not change, some 18 per cent of British men and 24 per cent of women will be considered obese in 2005, against 13 per cent and 16 per cent respectively today, the report said.

German professor finds true face of Shakespeare

BONN (R) — A German professor said she had proved a death mask of William Shakespeare was genuine, giving the world its first accurate portrait of the playwright and indicating he may have died of eye cancer. Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel, a professor of English literature at Mainz University, said forensic tests on the 17th century plaster of Paris mask in a castle south of Frankfurt matched it closely to portraits of the bard. "I feel marvellous, it's very exciting," said Prof. Hammerschmidt-Hummel, whose discovery was part of 10 years of research into artistic representations of Shakespeare.

U.K. spy HQ left out in the cold

London (R) — The building that housed Britain's MI5 counter-intelligence service, whose operatives struggled in the cold war to catch Communist spies, is to be knocked down to make way for a modern office block. Number One Curzon Street in the fashionable Mayfair district has been bought from the British government by property firm development securities. British media reported the selling price was £50 million (\$78 million).

Former U.S. House press aide held in bank heist

WASHINGTON (R) — A former press secretary to two Republican congressmen has been arrested on bank robbery charges, the Justice Department said Thursday. FBI agents arrested Thomas Springer, 46, at his home in Silver Spring, Maryland, a suburb of Washington. Mr. Springer, who had worked as press secretary for representatives Michael Forbes, a New York Republican, and Toby Roth, a Wisconsin Republican, is charged with robbing a bank in Vienna, Virginia, another Washington suburb, on Oct. 18.

Stuck up burglar creates a stink

ENCON, France (AFP) — A couple discovered the body of a burglar stuck up in a chimney after nine months after a mysterious break-in. The police said the couple did not immediately connect the smell with a shoe found in front of their fireplace in 1993, at their second home in Saint-Aubin-Sur-Mer, western France. It is only when they came to have their chimney cleaned that they found the use of the stink, identical to burglar's. Police said they were solving the case, after it came to be there. The man theory was that one of more colleagues left him here after he became sick, and did not return.

Britons face 'obesity explosion'

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German professor finds true face of Shakespeare

DUSS, Germany (AFP) — A German professor said he had proved a death mask of William Shakespeare was genuine, giving the world's first accurate portrait of the playwright and indicating he may have died at eye contact. The professor, Hans-Joachim Hammer, said forensic tests on a 17th-century plaster of Paris mask in a castle south of Frankfurt matched closely to portraits of the bard. "I feel marvelous at this very exciting" of Prof. Hammer's discovery was part of 10 years' research into artistic representations of Shakespeare.

U.K. spy HQ left out in the cold

London (R) — The building that housed Britain's counter-intelligence service, whose operations were disrupted in the cold war, is to be knocked down to make way for a modern office block. Number 10, in the famous Whitehall district, has been bought from the British government by a property firm developing security services. British negotiators said the selling price was £50 million (\$78 million).

Former U.S. House press aide held in bank heist

WASHINGTON (R) — A former press secretary to a Republican congressman has been arrested in a bank robbery charges. Justice Department said Thursday. FBI agents Wednesday arrested Thomas Springer, 31, at his home in Silver Spring, Maryland. Mr. Springer, who had worked as press secretary for Representative Michael Forbes of New York, was charged with robbing a bank in Vienna, Virginia, on Oct. 18.



A policeman stands on alert outside the burning Kolonnawa oil storage facility. Security was tightened in the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo following the rebel attack that blew up the oil tank complex (AFP photo)

Gorbachev presents memoirs, says 'Russians need me'

MOSCOW (AP) — Mikhail Gorbachev presented his hefty new memoirs Friday with a comment many disgruntled Russians might take as a threat: he's still considering running for president. Unpopular with most Russians and almost forgotten on the political scene, the former Soviet leader said his decision is "very difficult" but he is prepared to run. "I feel Russians need me, and not only Russians," said Mr. Gorbachev, who is as popular abroad as he is reviled at home. "If the situation turns in such a way that I have to come back, that there is no choice for me, then I'll give Russia everything I have," the 64-year-old Mr. Gorbachev said without elaborating. His remarks came at a press conference at which his two-volume, 1,250-page memoirs, *Life and Reform*, were released. The book already has been published in German; plans for an English edition are uncertain. It is his third book since leaving office but first full memoirs. Mr. Gorbachev is widely hailed in the West for launching political changes that eventually led to the collapse of Communist rule in the former Soviet Union. But for most Russians, Mr. Gorbachev is the embodiment of the painful Soviet disintegration, the ensuing political chaos and economic hardships brought by market reforms. The ex-Kremlin leader and his wife, Raisa, autographed his book for about 200 invited guests and media. Just as in his days in power, he refused repeatedly to himself in the third person, as Gorbachev, and gave long-winded answers. Mr. Gorbachev took the opportunity to call President Boris Yeltsin, his bitter rival, "paranoid," saying he expects him to cancel next June's presidential election. He also said he thinks democracy has fallen from favour in Russia. Mr. Gorbachev, who fought in vain to keep the Soviet Union intact before resigning in late 1991, also dismissed some Russians' sentiments for bringing the Soviet empire back as "a nostalgic game." "Today we have to think of a new union, a new political reality," he said. Besides writing his memoirs, Mr. Gorbachev has been busy traveling Russia and the West and heads the Gorbachev Fund think tank.

Hong Kong rights groups win victory at U.N.

GENEVA (R) — The U.N. Human Rights Committee said Friday Hong Kong citizens should still be protected by a key international rights treaty after the territory reverted to China, even if Beijing is not a party to it. The expert-level committee told a joint British-Hong Kong delegation that it should return next year to explain exactly how China intended to report to it on application of the treaty after the July 1, 1997, handover of Hong Kong. Hong Kong human rights campaigners welcomed the decision. They feared that China might refuse to report to the committee monitoring implementation of the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. "We're pleased with it. We'll all be back next year," said Christine Loh, a member of Hong Kong's Legislative Council who attended the two-day meeting. The Geneva hearing was given added urgency by news this week that China's hand-picked advisers in Hong Kong were suggesting a dilution of a bill of rights passed in 1991 to conform with the International Covenant. The committee's president, Francisco Aguilar Urbina of Costa Rica, said the experts considered that obligations entered into by Britain on human rights regulations in Hong Kong devolved to China. The committee understood this to be clearly agreed in the joint declaration between Britain and China which governs the handover, he said. Other experts on the committee said they believed China should not only continue applying the covenant after 1997 but also maintain the newly-democratised Legislative Council, which it has said it will abolish, and the bill of rights itself. "The bill of rights is clearly a law of Hong Kong implementing the covenant and I don't see that it could be taken to be incompatible with the basic law," said Australian expert Elizabeth Evatt, referring to the legal framework for post-1997 Hong Kong. "I would like to express the hope that the joint declaration will be upheld in every respect, in letter and spirit," she added. The committee asked the British-Hong Kong delegation to send a written report in May next year on the progress in its talks with China on how the covenant would be applied after 1997. A further meeting in Geneva will be held in October 1996. The committee also examined the human rights situation in Hong Kong under British rule and made several major criticisms. It criticised the make-up of the Legislative Council, which, though now more democratic, is still composed largely of representatives of "functional constituencies" from such sectors as commerce, industry and tourism, effectively leaving two classes of voter. Britain also came under attack for its treatment of Vietnamese boat people, especially at the Whitehead Detention Centre. The sharpest criticism came from German expert Eckart Klein, who said Hong Kong's situation would not be so precarious if Britain had not waited until "the dusk of its rule" before deciding to promote democracy and human rights.

Suu Kyi swept up in party meetings 3 months after release

RANGOON (AFP) — In six years of house arrest, Aung San Suu Kyi spent much of her time in meditation, reading and quiet reflection. Since her release on July 10, her days have been a flurry of meetings with political allies and supporters. Those who knew her well before 1989 say she is more spiritual now. She is also, understandably, more guarded as she feels her way forward in relations with the authorities. So far, Burma's military rulers have allowed Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD) colleagues a certain latitude. Visitors to her lakeside compound are photographed and their identities checked, but there is no physical obstacle to such contacts. The ruling junta has also apparently chosen to ignore the very political meetings which fill Aung San Suu Kyi's days, as well as the crowds that continue to flock to her gate where she speaks to them at weekends on subjects ranging from their economic hardships to politics and public morals. In an interview this week, she said the NLD was working hard to rebuild and reorganise after five years of disarray. Although the party won general elections in 1990, the junta refused to hand over power and jailed key NLD leaders. "I think, first, we've got to get the dialogue started, and then we can think about other things," Aung San Suu Kyi told AFP. Pouring tea in her sparsely-furnished sitting room, the woman who came to symbolise the pro-democracy movement acknowledged the path toward dialogue with the junta was not easy. "We've got to establish trust and find common ground," she said. "Initial stages of the dialogue would mainly be confidence building." Implicit in her remarks was the understanding that real dialogue had not yet begun — although she refused, as she has steadfastly done for three months now, to discuss the state of contacts with the government. The NLD would issue an official statement "when the time is right," she said. Diplomats in regular contact with Aung San Suu Kyi since July were divided on whether that time might be approaching. No one was mentioned by name, but readers were left in no doubt as to the target when Friday's commentary wrote that it was easy to criticise, but that "subversive" speech or ideas risked triggering "a rough course of actions" when they "pass the limit of tolerance." Aung San Suu Kyi commented dispassionately: "I pay no attention to these articles written under pseudonyms because I think this shows a lack of courage and a lack of integrity." While choosing her words carefully, she was sometimes sharply critical of the SLORC, which has ruled Burma since 1988. She disputed suggestions of impressive economic progress recently in Burma, saying there was instead a "boom in bribery and corruption." "I would have thought that was as big a boom, if not a bigger one, than the economic boom," she said. Dressed in an orange traditional blouse and patterned longyi, Aung San Suu Kyi again asked foreign investors to "please wait until the right time" before pouring money into Burma. "I think once the process of democratisation has started, and if (all) investors would take the same stand, then I think democratisation would come that much quicker," she said.



Aung San Suu Kyi

Tamil rebels massacre 66 in Sri Lanka villages

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels shot and hacked 66 villagers to death in the east and sparked a firefight in the capital Saturday, diverting attention of the armed forces from a northern push against the guerrillas, said military and witnesses. Infants were among 31 dead at the mixed Sinhalese-Tamil village of Poonalikulawa in Welikanda, between Polonnaruwa and Batticaloa. Most of those killed were hacked to death by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a doctor at Polonnaruwa Hospital told Reuters. Six other villagers were wounded. "Most had suffered sharp injuries," the doctor said. "Also there were some Tamils among the dead who had been shot." In Mangalagama, in eastern Ampara, the Tigers used machetes and swords to kill 16 men, women and children and wound five others, a witness said from the hospital. The Tigers, fighting for a Tamil homeland in the east and north of majority Sinhalese Sri Lanka, also attacked the village of Padaviya, in the eastern Welioya district, killing 19, the military said. The attacks occurred between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. (2030 GMT and 2230 GMT Friday). The villages lie in the border area between government and LTTE-controlled territory. In the capital, two LTTE cadres shot dead two civilians near a Colombo oil depot blown up by the rebels Friday, witnesses said. The two were caught in crossfire. A third man was killed shortly afterwards by unidentified gunmen. Scores of air force, army and police personnel cordoned off marshland near the Orugodawatte oil depot, searching for LTTE cadres believed at large after Friday's attacks. Black smoke billowed over eastern Colombo for a second day Saturday as fires at Orugodawatte and Kolonnawa continued to burn. About 90,000 tonnes of crude oil, 40,000 tonnes of diesel and 15,000 tonnes of kerosene, including aviation fuel, were up in flames, police said. Crime Detective Bureau Senior Superintendent Lionel Gunatillake said six LTTE members had been arrested in connection with Friday's attack — one in a getaway lorry found packed with weapons near Kolonnawa and five in "safe houses" dotted around the city. At least 25 people died, including Black Tiger suicide bombers, and 32 were wounded in the violence. The Tigers, who in May hacked and shot to death 42 Sinhalese villagers in Kallarawa in the east, were feared ready to stage more suicide attacks in a bid to stall an army offensive in the rebel-held north, security forces said Friday night. Military sources said an aviation fuel shortage could affect air support for a major push by some 10,000 soldiers against the rebels in their Jaffna peninsula stronghold which began Tuesday. Military analysts have long feared a rebel attack in Colombo to divert the armed forces' attention from the north. Analysts say the military operation looked like the opening phase of a final push to defeat the line, who have long controlled the Jaffna peninsula and the city of the same name. Security has been tightened at Colombo's already safety-conscious airport after the Tamil Tiger rebel attack on the two oil depots in the city, officials said Saturday. "We have very tight security and now we have a little bit more," said Air Vice Marshal Maurice Fernando, executive director of operations at Sri Lanka's only international airport. He said security forces were spending more time checking coaches and buses for suspected LTTE guerrillas.



Sri Lankan police round up Tamil suspects in the Sri Lankan Capital Colombo during a search operation to look for rebels involved in the attack on the oil storage depots (AFP photo)

Taiwan worries over U.S.-China summit

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan is concerned it may become a sacrificial lamb for the United States to repair relations with China at a summit next week, officials and commentators said Saturday. "We are afraid that we may be the lamb which is sacrificed," said a Taiwan government official who declined to be identified. "When the two big powers sit down face to face, it is difficult for an absent smaller power to safeguard its interests." U.S. President Bill Clinton will meet his Chinese counterpart Jiang Zemin in New York Tuesday in what is expected to be a tough encounter during which the two will attempt to patch up deeply frayed relations. Mr. Jiang has made it clear in interviews with U.S. media organisations this month that the question of Taiwan is near the top of Beijing's summit agenda. Infuriated when Washington allowed Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui to make a private visit to the United States in June, China has repeatedly called for U.S. assurances that leading Taiwan officials will not be invited in future. Their insistence derives from Beijing's position, held since China's civil war ended in 1949, that Taiwan is a renegade province and its government is not entitled to international relations. But Washington, which upgraded its relations with Taiwan last year to allow more high-level visits, has refused to bow to Beijing's demands. Jennifer Galt, spokeswoman for the American Institute in Taiwan, the United States' highest representative office on the island, said Washington would hold out against Beijing's demands. "The big question is whether Taiwan interests will be sacrificed. No, they won't," Ms. Galt said. But she added that since China's vehement criticism of Mr. Lee's trip, U.S. officials have used concessionary language which suggests it will be harder for high-level visits such as Mr. Lee's to take place in the future. The Taiwan policy review of September 1994, Washington's first upgrading of policy with Taiwan since it switched diplomatic relations from Taipei to Beijing in 1979, sees more high-level visits approved on a "case-by-case" basis. Since June, two more qualifying words — "rare" and "personal" — have been added informally to the "case-by-case" stipulation on bilateral visits, Ms. Galt said. "These are not formal reviews but they have been made in officials' statements," Ms. Galt said. A second Taiwan official said that if it came to a conflict between U.S. domestic interests and Taiwan policy at the summit, Mr. Clinton would give ground on Taiwan. Among U.S. concerns is that China is not abiding by an agreement reached earlier this year to curtail widespread piracy of U.S. intellectual property. Washington is also concerned over China's nuclear cooperation with Iran, to which it has said it may sell reactors. "The U.S. may not say in a public statement that it will curtail visits to Taiwan but we are concerned about deals that may be made in private," said the second Taiwan official.

Kashmir lawyers on strike as capital shifts

SRINAGAR, India (R) — Lawyers in troubled Kashmir led a crippling strike Saturday to protest against the alleged killing by troops of a colleague as Indian officials began the annual ritual of shifting capitals. In Srinagar, both of a five-year-old anti-India rebellion, shops and offices were closed and most residents stayed indoors as part of a one-day protest by lawyers over the shooting of Ghulam Qadir. Sailani Tuesday. The Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association, which called the protest, said Mr. Sailani was killed by security forces. Newspapers said he was shot after troops retaliated against a rebel attack at a village on Srinagar's outskirts. Police said the lawyer was killed by unidentified assailants. The state's civil secretariat shut down for the winter Friday. The 3,500 officials were set to begin work in Jammu on Nov. 1. With the government shift to Jammu, a three-month-long hostage crisis also seemed on the backburner as authorities waited for news of four Western tourists. Now held for more than 100 days, Britons Keith Mangan and Paul Wells, American Donald Hutchings and German Dirk Hasert were on a trekking expedition in south Kashmir when they were kidnapped in early July. The kidnappers, the previously unknown Al-Faran group, are demanding the release of 15 colleagues, including some foreigners, held in Indian jails. India has declined to release the foreigners but says the Kashmiris could be released under routine review. Al-Faran raised the stakes by killing a fifth hostage, Norwegian Hans-Christian Ostroe. A note found beside his decapitated body on Aug. 13 threatened to kill the others unless the group's demands were met within two days. The deadline passed without apparent harm to the hostages. There has been no news about the four since the kidnappers cut off daily contact with intermediaries on Sept. 19. Indian officials say they are worried about the long gap but believe the hostages are alive and safe. In the past week, authorities have denied reports in local media quoting witnesses from different villages as saying the tourists and their captors had been sighted. "There is no truth in these reports," a government spokesman said. Meanwhile an Indian official raised hopes Saturday for the release of the four Western hostages kidnapped in Kashmir, saying they were safe and would rejoin their families. D.D. Saklani, adviser to the governor of the troubled Himalayan province, was quoted by United News of India (UNI) as saying that efforts were under way for an early release of the hostages. But he did not say when he thought the three-month-old crisis would end.

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Threat works for now

PRESIDENT BILL Clinton's threat this week to veto any congressional action to transfer the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem has apparently succeeded in postponing deliberations over Republican Senate majority leader Bob Dole's initiative concerning the move. Putting off a congressional decision for now, however, is not exactly equivalent to killing off the idea altogether. Given the strong bipartisan sentiment within the two chambers of the Congress in favour of appeasing the Jewish lobby in Washington, it would take much more than a veto threat by the president to thwart what would otherwise be a dangerous action by the American legislators.

That is why Israel and its supporters must be persuaded to give up the whole attempt pending on amicable resolution of the question of Jerusalem during the third and final state of the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. And this is where Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin should try to prevail on the over zealous supporters of his country in the U.S. Congress and elsewhere not to outdo Herod, especially at a time when any precipitous action on the Holy City could derail the entire Middle East peace process and undo what has been painstakingly achieved over the past four years.

The Arab countries which have signed peace treaties with Israel are likewise called upon to serve notice that they would not stand idle against all those who wish to unilaterally change the status of Jerusalem, for it is true that their ability to live up to their commitments towards regional peace would be severely curtailed if the future of the city is sealed before a satisfactory agreement on it is finalised.

There is nothing that could prevent countries from relocating their embassies to Jerusalem in the future as long as control over East Jerusalem is restored to the Arab side in accordance with international legitimacy.

We still believe and will continue to believe that past and current efforts by Israel to alter the status of Jerusalem are null and void in accordance with the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions. Thus any move by the U.S. legislators (or anybody else, for that matter) that would shake basic principles governing the Holy City could only make a final Arab-Israeli settlement that much more difficult, if not impossible, to reach.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Dustour praised the president of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, for calling on the Arab countries to end their differences and help terminate the U.N. sanctions on Iraq. Muhammad Kawash said that the call from Sheikh Zayed drew a quick and favourable response from the Emir of Bahrain, and hopefully, it will draw similar responses from other Arab leaders. Every one knows what it means to see the Arab leaders reconciled and their countries launching sincere brotherly relations, said the writer, who emphasised the need for a unified Arab front not only in ending a black era of misunderstanding but also in launching a new stage of sincere cooperation in all matters of national interest. It is regrettable that similar calls to that of Sheikh Zayed had been heard in the past but were not heeded because of inter-Arab disputes, he added. The writer said it is hoped that the fresh calls would not be disregarded because, he said, continued differences among the Arab states means continued draining of their resources and wealth, which should have been utilised in socio-economic development.

A WRITER in Al Ra'i attacked Jordanians who oppose normalisation with Israel as defeatist elements who try to cover up for their impotence through confrontation by declaring their outright rejection of the Amman summit meeting. Fahed Al Fanek said that these elements are suffering from an inferiority complex and lack of self-confidence in their ability to deal with the coming challenge. The fact that the meeting is to be held in Amman and that the Jordanian delegation is the largest means that Jordan has the ability to steer the conference in such a way that it would favour its interests and those of the Arab Nation, said the writer. Singling out the Jordan Medical Association (JMA) and its president for adamantly refusing to see Jordanian doctors taking part in the coming event, the writer said that the JMA is depriving the medical community in Jordan of providing itself as one among the leading professionals in the Middle East. He said shunning international conferences that may help promote Jordan because Israel is attending them is tantamount to suicide.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

Possible benefits of MENA summit

MANY QUESTIONS persist over the possible dividends of the Middle East and North Africa economic summit (MENA), which will convene in Amman next week. A legitimate question to ask is: What are we to expect from this important occasion?

At the outset, we should admit that the mere fact that this international conference will be held in our capital, Amman, is, in itself, a great benefit. For several days Jordan will be the focus of the media around the world. This is an invaluable chance to introduce Jordan to the world and to give favourable impressions which will have political, touristic and cultural consequences that can be felt for many years to come.

The fact that Amman will be the media capital of the world for three full days is not all that is to be gained from the summit. Jordan is supposed to be an active participant in the conference. Jordan will enjoy a special status as the host country. His Majesty the King will deliver the opening speech, which will be heard in six continents around the globe. It is a rare chance to address the world and have all peoples listen to what we have to say. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan will chair the conference, using his extensive experience in the activity of conferences, which will give him the chance to lead the conference and set the tone for its proceedings.

Hopefully, the participants will have the chance to know Jordan firsthand, some of them for the first time. They will

examine the new favourable investment climate, which may succeed in attracting Arab and foreign investors on the medium and long-terms.

In fact, some dividends of the conference have already started to materialise. From the investment point of view, a contract was signed between the Aqaba Region Authority and an American company to build a touristic village in the southern shores of Aqaba, including a luxurious hotel at the cost of \$120 million. The construction of the project will begin within 180 days and will be the starting point of the emerging Jordanian Riviera at the Red Sea.

Perhaps the most important benefit from an organisational point of view is the passage of the legal package, which includes the Income Tax Law, the Sales Tax Law, the Encouragement of Investments Law, the Labour Law, and very soon the Companies Law and the Customs Law. These radical reforms would not have been possible, at this remarkable speed, had it not been for the impending conference.

If the new package of reformed economic laws did not attract many Arab and foreign investors, it will definitely tempt the hesitating Jordanian investor.

Around 90 per cent of the direct investments in Jordan is financed by the capital of Jordanians, residents and expatriates. Jordanian investors should always be our main target. A country is never built except by its own citizens. Others, seeing the successful results, will follow.

Tunis lashes out at Islamist phantom

By Roula Khalaf and James Whittington

All opposition is being silenced in the process

THE YOUNG Tunisian businessman gets visibly nervous when the talk turns to politics. He admits the lack of freedom of expression is at times stifling, but "it is better this way," he says. "Otherwise they — the Islamists — would take over."

Yet in this island of stability between bloody Algeria and unpredictable Libya, there are no visible signs of Islamic fundamentalism.

Women are harassed for wearing the traditional headscarf.

Fewer Tunisians now regularly go to mosques to pray. As one diplomat put it, more than three visits a week are treated as suspicious by the authorities.

Tunisia's Islamist Al Nahda movement, which gained popularity in the 1980s, has been forced underground by President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali, who threw thousands of its supporters in jail in the early 1990s.

Since then, the government has adopted a strategy of "preventive repression" aimed at people who are considered prone to Islamism. These include old friends and sympathisers and those who have helped the families of jailed Islamists.

Since Tunisians no longer dare speak their minds, it has become difficult to gauge the strength of what remains of the Islamist movement. But by continuing to warn of the threat, and convincing Tunisians the only alternative to the present system would be an Islamist state, Mr. Ben Ali has managed to tighten his grip on power, perpetuating the virtual one-party rule the country has lived under since independence in 1956.

Newspapers are rife with stories of religious extrem-

ists' horror perpetrated in neighbouring Algeria. No matter that Tunisia's Islamist leaders in exile say they denounce violence and domino theories of an Islamist Algeria spilling over into Tunisia are no longer regarded as credible.

Mr. Ben Ali has been a champion of economic liberalisation, his policies culminating this year in the signing of a partnership agreement with the European Union (EU) for the creation of a free trade zone. But the more he opens up economically, the more he seems to close down politically.

When the government clamped down on the Islamists in 1991 and 1992, even the opposition parties were happy to cooperate, purging their ranks of members who disagreed with this strategy. However, instead of building a secular opposition, the government's repressive measures have begun to reach the regime's old allies.

Even Tunisia's forthright women's associations, which were most vocal in their opposition to the Islamists, are now harassed for daring to ask for a semblance of political freedom.

While most of the middle classes are happy to accept the government's arguments and concentrate on making money, some segments of society are beginning to question it. After applying to start a new political party, Mustapha Ben Jafer, who had been pushed out of one of the main opposition parties, was sacked suddenly from his position as chief of radiology at a Tunis hospital last month. The dismissal brought

protests from the medical establishment.

The once friendly opposition, meanwhile, is starting to speak out. Earlier this month, Mohammed Mouadde, the leader of the Movement des Socialistes Democratiques, the principal opposition party and until now a government ally, was arrested for making public an unusually harsh letter to the president attacking the ruling Rassemblement Constitutionnel Democratique (RCD).

"Democratic pluralism, as it exists today, serves only as a democratic decor offering a perverted image of the choice of society we have made," wrote Mr. Mouadde. "This has the potential to engender today and in the future an indifference on the part of the population to both politics and national activity. Violence and extremism, it must be noted, find favourable ground in such a climate."

The official explanation for Mr. Mouadde's arrest was that he had dubious foreign contacts and received funds from a foreign government, said to be Libya.

"The arrest was a warning to the whole opposition that even the closest to the government among them are no longer safe," says a human rights monitor in Tunis.

Mr. Mouadde could no longer hold his tongue when successive promises of an opening up of the political system proved illusory and the RCD carried almost all votes in municipal elections last March. This came after the opposition had ended up with only 19 seats in legislative elections in 1994 against 144 for the RCD.

The opposition accuses the government of falsifying election results.

It makes no sense to make a martyr of Mouadde," says a Western diplomat. "It is a bit mysterious that a country that does so many rational things can be so irrational at times."

It is also a risky time to be alienating political allies. Tunisia's partnership agreement with the EU anchors the economy in the European sphere but presents as many challenges as opportunities by opening up the Tunisian market to competitive European goods.

Tunisia's economic masters, have ensured steady growth, reined in inflation and trimmed the budget deficit to a mere 2.4 per cent of gross domestic product. But unemployment is 15 per cent and businessmen warn that, as companies adapt, more young people could lose their jobs.

More than that, few believe that the government's insecurity is justified. As one leading businessman puts it, if Tunisia held free elections today the RCD would win a comfortable majority.

Opposition members say they fear that by not allowing them to offer themselves as an alternative to the Islamists, the government is giving credence to the view that the opposition has to go underground.

"It is our role to say that we are a democratic alternative, that it does not have to be either the regime or the Islamists," says a member of the opposition. "The danger is that if a legal civil society is not allowed to flourish, radical groups will be able to regroup people and if Islamism is reborn, it will be of a more radical nature."

The Financial Times

Playing 'MENApoly'

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

THE UPCOMING Middle East and North Africa Economic Summit (MENA), which will be held in Amman on Oct. 29, is a three-day affair that may offer years of development opportunities to many participants, including Jordan. The prize is a possible four billion plus dollars of investment that may pour into Jordan from the entrepreneurs and governments of over 60 countries, as more than 900 private sector representatives, approximately 500 government officials, 173 speakers from 29 countries and 12 international organisations, and a 1000 journalists come to Jordan in a few days. The game is a mixture of cut-throat competition, cut-throat deals and counter deals, and savvy politico-economic favouritism.

Jordan's private sector has a list of proposals for investment in projects of which 69 are industrial, 17 agricultural, 10 related to the medical field, and 12 in the tourist sector. The total cost of these projects is \$1.2 billion. The Ministry of Planning, representing the public sector, has prepared 27 proposals for public sector investment programmes with a total worth of \$3 billion. Judging from the size of the funds demanded by each sector, the private sector will play a secondary role to the public sector in MENA.

Again, Jordan's public sector dominates the business scene which may be forgivable in this case because we are, after all, a developing nation that is in need of funds for infrastructure development. However, according to a well-respected group of economists that is comprised of Robert Lucas (this year's Nobel laureate in economics), Thomas Sargent and Robert Barro, borrowing in the present and paying the principal plus interest later in the future from domestic tax revenues is equivalent to taxing the people now. In other words, when the government borrows money to finance its expenditures rather than taxing citizens to finance them, the public's present tax liability is reduced but its future tax liability is increased, unless of course we are forgiven our debts like the recent \$700 million debt cancellation by the U.S. (which is not likely to happen again in the next 10 years at least). Nevertheless, borrowing for projects that have high rates of return such as investments in telecommunications, railways that connect the north and south of Jordan, etc., can be justified because these projects have a rate of return that easily exceeds 25 per cent.

Many of the countries participating in the conference are investment starved and can be viewed as our competitors. Consider Israel and Egypt for example. Israel, with a population of 5 million people, a \$74 billion GDP (second in the Middle East only to Saudi Arabia and Iran, respectively) and a 92 per cent literacy rate among its Jewish population, has an array of products that range from diamonds to electronics to fruits. Egypt, on the other hand, has 69 million people, a GDP of \$41.2 billion, a literacy rate of 44 per cent, and products that consist of petrochemicals, agricultural products, and raw materials. Both countries have large trade deficits; i.e., they import more than they export. Jordan, on the other hand, has a population of 4 million people, a GDP of \$5.7 billion, a literacy rate of 71 per cent and a list of products that consist mainly of primary products. Jordan's trade deficit is more severe in relative terms than those of the other two. However, its economy is undergoing major restructuring and the outlook can be very optimistic, especially in the ser-

"Many of the countries participating in the conference are investment starved and can be viewed as our competitors."

vices sector. Furthermore, our labour force boasts of a higher literacy rate than that of Egypt and most of the other countries in the region, except for the Gulf states, and Jordan's cost of living is well below that of Israel. Our political system is among the most stable in the region and our leadership is probably the most liked and respected for its foresight and its balanced, well-thought approach to international and domestic affairs. Also, according to the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI), an index which is a composite score of several variables that measure the level of human development in a nation, Israel is ranked 21st, in the world. Egypt is ranked 107th and Jordan is ranked 80th. Even though we may not have the strongest economy in the region we do place well in the middle among the participants.

Israel is going to downplay its role and abilities in the conference, according to an article in an Israeli business magazine. The author of the article claimed that most Arab countries were surprised by the level of professionalism and readiness of the Israeli team in Casablanca, especially since most of the Arab teams came unprepared. Also, to the dismay of some Arab countries, many Arab businessmen scurried to the Israeli booth to strike deals. In other words, the rule that business is apolitical held true in Casablanca. Furthermore, the author of the article suggested that in order not to alienate Arab investors, the ideal strategy for Israel would be to act as a benefactor, a friend and a partner and not as one who can dominate the whole region. Will the opinion makers in Israel listen to this advice and not go after the gold this time? I don't know, but it is an interesting strategy. After all, MENA is only a conference and not the end game. We do know, however, that Israel has prepared over 160 regional projects that are worth around \$26 billion.

Egypt, because of the state of its economy, will play an aggressive game at MENA. It has the largest delegation and it is setting shop way ahead of the others. Therefore, Jordan should expect its heaviest competition from Egypt, especially since both our products and abilities are similar. However, Egypt's emphasis will be on funding for the public sector because it has a large public sector and a poor infrastructure. In tourism our industry should have the upper hand because ours is still in its infancy while theirs is fully mature.

There are many players in the "MENApoly" game. After all is said and done, Jordan's economy will improve further after the conference from having learned about its competitors, from having known about its standing relative to the region and the world, from drawing some investments large or small, and from the exposure of our beautiful people and country to the world. Let's view MENA as a game for which we should be well-prepared. Neither I nor any of the so-called experts, will be able to determine the outcome objectively at this stage of the game. But, being the world's most gracious hosts, we can enjoy, for these days, our defining role: Hosts to the world.

LETTERS

Insult to the people

To the Editor:

TO SUGGEST that anyone can win a presidential election with 99.66 per cent of the popular vote is not only an obvious farce, but a direct insult to the people concerned. Not even a flock of sheep could have such a consensus.

Omar Abbas,
Amman.

Rights for women

To the Editor:

THE JORDAN Times' editorial on Oct. 19 rightly addresses the issue concerning Palestinian passport rights. But the last paragraph caught my attention. It said "till that moment in time arrives, Jordanians, all Jordanians, whether new or old, must continue to be regarded and treated as citizens of this country —

entitled, as they should be, to the rights and privileges associated with this citizenship."

To me the issue is not, "whether new or old," but rather, "whether male or female," as citizenship rights do not apply equally to both Jordanian sexes. It is my understanding that the Constitution states that all citizens of the country enjoy equal rights. Why then is it impossible for a Jordanian woman to pass her Jordanian nationality to her children? Why is the nationality of a child determined by the nationality of his father and not equally through his mother? This discrimination in the application of equal rights affects countless women in this country and should be corrected. If the women in this country are not entitled to be treated equally, then the Constitution should be rewritten accordingly.

Karen Asfour,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Regent reviews summit facilities

(Continued from page 1)

Grand Palace Hotel and reviewed the facilities for accommodating the guests. He also visited the Palace of Culture where the opening session will be held.

The private sector meanwhile announced that it was making final preparations for the conference and was preparing working papers to present projects, according to Thabet Al Taher, chairman of the private sector's executive committee in charge of preparations.

The private sector plans to present 139 projects of which 70 are for industrial schemes.

Ministry of, Information Secretary General Nayef Mulla said in a statement Saturday that the information committee will organise a tour of the different press centres for the local and foreign press prior to the opening of the conference.

Prince Ra'd also visited the Prime Ministry where he met with acting Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh and Deputy Prime Minister Khaled Al Karaki. Discussion at the meeting focused on Jordan's preparations to host the MENA summit and domestic issues.

Saudi police hunt for bomber

(Continued from page 1)

killing one person and wounding 16. Sixteen Shiite Muslims from Kuwait, accused of acting on behalf of Iran, were executed.

Two years earlier, more than 400 people, most of them Iranians, died in clashes between Saudi security forces and protesters during an anti-Western rally organised by Tehran during another Mecca pilgrimage.

The committee used mosques to spread the opposition's message.

The Saudi authorities, after the 1991 Gulf war when U.S.-led forces deployed in the kingdom evicted Iraq from Kuwait, banned a Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights. They announced the arrest of 110 sympathisers in 1993.

The committee used mosques to spread the opposition's message.

RJ to fly home 14 Jordanians

(Continued from page 1)

The ship's owners said later the vessel was now travelling at normal speed but was not expected to reach Cyprus before late on Saturday. It would leave on Sunday with a first batch of Palestinians and make a second trip to collect others.

More than half of the Palestinians are children. News of yet another delay was greeted with dismay by the Palestinians aboard the Countess M, anchored off five miles off Cyprus.

"We are fed up... it has been 10 days now and we still don't know where we will be taken," one passenger told reporters.

"They (officials) did not yet tell us who will be going and who will be staying," complained one passenger.

"We want to know. We are waiting for a ship that is not arriving," he said.

Some of the Palestinians whined away the hours fishing from the side of the Greek-owned ship in a scene whose calm contrasted with the unrest of the past few days.

Frustration among Palestinians boiled over into anger on Friday and a mob got into a shouting match with the captain and crew of the ship, scaring away a medical team trying to board.

Tension subsided when five Syrian officials boarded the Countess M and explained efforts to end their flight.

In August, Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi ordered 30,000 Palestinians to leave his country and return to Palestinian self-ruled areas, ostensibly to expose what he calls the sham peace between the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Israel.

Entry to the Palestinian-ruled Gaza Strip and Jericho is controlled by Israel.

Some 1,000 expelled from Libya are stranded at a desert camp in the Libyan-Egyptian border.

Harbour sources said the Countess M would be allowed into Larnaca dock once the Syrian vessel arrived in order to transfer its passengers.

Meanwhile Colonel Qadhafi will hold a news conference in Tripoli on Tuesday, the Cairo bureau of the Libyan news agency JANA said.

In a letter telefaxed to Reuters, JANA said it would arrange transport for local and foreign journalists who wanted to cover what it called Col. Qadhafi's "international news conference."

Col. Qadhafi, who rarely meets the international media, held a news conference earlier this month at a camp near the border with Egypt that houses hundreds of Palestinians he expelled.

From Ghalla Alul in Beirut

THREE PALESTINIAN journalists were earlier this month denied the chance to participate in a training course in Beirut after the Lebanese authorities refused to grant them entry visas. The reason: their nationality.

Lebanon decided to prevent all Palestinians from entering the country in the aftermath of Libya's expulsion in August of its Palestinian residents. It also imposed strict conditions on Palestinians who hold Lebanese travel documents, demanding that they obtain exit permits from the interior ministry before leaving its territories.

While the three Palestinian journalists from Gaza were allowed to go back to their country after they were not allowed into Lebanon, thousands of others who have been expelled from Libya are still stranded on the Egyptian border and on a ship in Cyprus.

"When I was prevented from entering Lebanon, I felt like I am a prisoner wherever I go," said Asya Abdul Hadi, who was among the journalists who were prevented from entering Lebanon. "Because I am a Palestinian, I should have many passports to satisfy all governments," she told the Jordan Times from Gaza. She said that Lebanon is not justified in "exploiting Libya's position."

Libya's expulsion of its Palestinian residents has invoked old Lebanese fears of solving the Palestine refugees problem at Lebanon's expense. Lebanon is afraid that a final solution to the Palestinian problem could entail settling permanently in its territories all the Palestinian refugees it hosts. Such an eventuality, some Lebanese say, would disturb the delicate balance among the country's various ethnic and religious groups. Hence is Lebanon's refusal to allow Palestinians, even those who carry Lebanese travel documents, into its territories.

"Lebanese are afraid of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon since the country hosts more than 650,000 Palestinians" who are spread in 13 refugee camps all over the country, said Nabil Abu Munsif, a senior editor at An Nahar newspaper.

Mr. Abu Munsif added that this fear increased after Libya's recent decision to expel over 35 thousand Palestinians to different Arab countries, among them Lebanon.

"Libya got rid of the Palestinians who were a burden for it and Lebanon prevented them from entering the country. They are treating us like playing cards," said Saleem Kayed, a supermarket owner in Shatila camp who has nephews and cousins among the Palestinians stranded in Cyprus.

Some Palestinians in Lebanon believe that their kinsmen are the victims of an internal political power struggle. The Maronites are known to be among the staunchest opponents of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. The government, these Palestinians charge, closed its doors to Palestinians to win the Maronites' support for the extension of President Elias Hrawi's mandate.

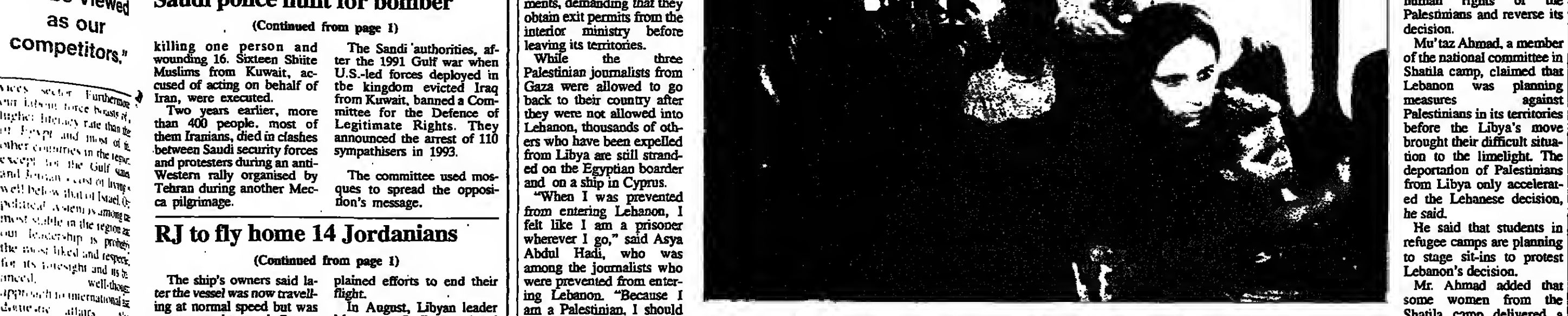
"Lebanon wanted to appease the Maronites (and to win their support in its bid to) extend the president's mandate" claimed Mohammad Rabea, a pharmacist in Shatila camp in Beirut's southern suburbs whose brother was expelled from Libya and was not allowed to enter Lebanon.

A Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) official, Saleh Zeidan, said that there is no reason for the Lebanese to be afraid of the Palestinian presence. Palestinians, he said, consider their stay in Lebanon temporary.

Calling Lebanon's decision to refuse entry to Palestinians a "collective punishment" Mr. Zeidan

Palestinian refugees uneasy about their future as Lebanon closes its door to their stranded kinsmen

Palestinians who have been expelled from Libya wait in a bus at the Egyptian border (AFP photo)



told the Jordan Times that "obviously, Lebanon is pressuring Palestinians to leave the country, and this action will not serve that purpose."

Mr. Zeidan rejected An Nahar editor's argument that Palestinians were taking away jobs from the Lebanese. He said the employment market in Lebanon is not affected by the Palestinian presence because only a few of the Palestinians are allowed to get work permits.

Mr. Zeidan called on the Lebanese government to take into consideration the human rights of the Palestinians and reverse its decision.

Mu'taz Ahmad, a member of the national committee in Shatila camp, claimed that Lebanon was planning measures against Palestinians in its territories before the Libya's move brought their difficult situation to the limelight. The deportation of Palestinians from Libya only accelerated the Lebanese decision, he said.

He said that students in refugee camps are planning to stage sit-ins to protest Lebanon's decision.

Mr. Ahmad added that some women from the Shatila camp delivered a memorandum to the interior minister, urging him to reverse the decision and be more flexible with Palestinians who hold Lebanese travel documents.

"We want to keep trying with the government until it changes its decision," Mr. Ahmad said.

Interior ministry officials were not available for comment.

But the editor at An Nahar newspaper did not expect a change in the Lebanese policy unless Libya takes back the Palestinians it has expelled.

If that happens, "then Lebanon might change its position towards receiving Palestinians," Mr. Abu Munsif told the Jordan Times.

For Taiwan's Lee, a quest for world stature

By Thomas L. Friedman

TAIPEI — The crisis simmering today between Taiwan and mainland China has replaced Korea as the powder keg voted most-likely-to-explode by Asian leaders. The man holding the fuse is Lee Teng-hui, president of Taiwan, the only person in the world whose receipt of an alumni award plaque from Cornell University almost started a war across the Straits of Taiwan.

Mr. Lee invited me over for an interview Friday in his office in downtown Taipei. The conversation left me both reassured and disquieted. It was reassuring because Mr. Lee is an unlikely fuse. A sober, owl-like man, who weighed his words carefully, he evinced a strong grasp of the red lines that constrain the behaviour of Taiwan — red lines he is certainly trying to push out but is not likely to breach.

It was disquieting, though, because, as he made clear, this is a plastic moment in relations between China and Taiwan, a time when new pressures are bending old constraints to the breaking point. The potential for miscalculation by Beijing or Taipei is enormous.

With that in mind, Mr. Lee made two overarching points: First, he is not seeking internationally recognised independence for Taiwan — a move that could easily spark a war. He is, though, seeking a higher profile for Taiwan on the world stage — one that would be commensurate with its economic clout and free-wheeling democracy but would still fall short of formal independence. Second, he signalled a strong desire to step back from the brink and resume the quiet dialogue that had been going on between Beijing and Taipei since 1987, but was broken

Wave of gang violence leaves Los Angeles under siege

By Jeff Meyer

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Members of street gangs in Los Angeles made headlines in the last three years by calling a truce. They're making headlines this year, too — only now, it's because of a fresh wave of violence.

Three shootings over seven days in September have frightened crime-weary Los Angeles residents and moved elected officials to beef up efforts to stop the violence in gang-saturated neighbourhoods.

Gang members ambushed a car that made a wrong turn, killing a three-year-old girl and wounding her younger brother.

A 12-year-old boy heading home after a doggers game is wounded by a bullet fired from a van on the freeway. Police suspect the gunman was a gang member.

A teen-age gang member in a crowded fast-food restaurant is killed in a drive-by shooting that also wounds three other customers.

"The reality is, it's happening too often in this city... I'm getting tired of it," said city councilman Mike Hernandez.

Mayor Richard Riordan called for the creation of a task force of city, county and state law enforcement authorities to combat gang crime the first time the different jurisdictions will join to address the problem.

Gov. Pete Wilson signed legislation making drive-by shootings an offence punishable by death. "Hanging is too good for them," he said. "To these gutless cowards I want there to be

U.S. Senate to debate Jerusalem

(Continued from page 1)

Christopher as saying Mr. Clinton would veto the bill in its present form.

Mr. Daschle said California Democrat Dianne Feinstein and a number of other Senate Democrats were working with Mr. Dole to resolve differences on the bill.

Like most other countries, the United States maintains its embassy in Tel Aviv.

Mr. Dole's bill sets aside \$100 million in State Department funds for building a new embassy and would require that the embassy be moved to Jerusalem no later than May 31, 1999.

This would be at the end of a five-year transitional period laid out in the 1993 declaration of principles on Palestinian self-government agreed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The bill, which has the support of nearly 70 senators, is a revised version of an earlier Dole measure that would have required ground-breaking on a new embassy next year. This provision has been deleted.

Mr. Dole's initiative has been called an effort to win Jewish support in his campaign for the 1996 Republican presidential nomination.

The embassy transfer is strongly backed by Jewish groups including the main pro-Israel lobby, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

"AIPAC commends and congratulates all the co-sponsors (of the bill) for their leadership and persistence in support of moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, which has been the capital of the Jewish people for 3,000 years and of the state of Israel for nearly five decades," AIPAC Executive Director Neal Sher said in a statement.

But James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute, said in an interview that the bill would seriously compromise the U.S. role in the Middle East peace process and accused Mr. Dole of "transparent pandering."

"It undermines the credibility of the United States as a cosignatory to an agreement that specifically guaranteed that there would be no determination of these issues until final status discussions between the parties," Mr. Zogby said.

Bosnian foes swap detainees

(Continued from page 1)

massacres that changed the course of the war.

The market was closed in June, after a U.N. scheme to ban heavy weapons from a 20-kilometre zone around the city, instituted after the first attack in February 1994, broke down.

The second bomb this August led to NATO air strikes against the Serbs, and eventually to a ceasefire and the scheduled peace talks.

"It's good to be back," Esma Muratovic, a survivor of one of the massacres, said.

"I missed seeing people, I missed this street, even if it brings back bad memories."

As preparations were stepped up for the crucial talks at an air base in the United States, clear differences between the warring parties, and between the major powers involved in the peace process, made clear the negotiations would not be easy.

French President Jacques Chirac threw his weight behind Russian calls for talks in Moscow before those scheduled in Ohio.

Perhaps after the power shifting is sorted out in Beijing and the elections are over in Taiwan, we could all consider the possibility of a meeting again.

off by Beijing in the wake of Mr. Lee's visit in June to Cornell.

Asked what his long-term goal was, Mr. Lee said: "It has always been and remains unification with the mainland. But unification must be achieved only when we can guarantee democracy, freedom and prosperity for all the peoples of a unified

President Bill Clinton if he got the chance?

"I would tell him I welcome the resumption of normal relations between the U.S. and Beijing, but no one should be allowed to manipulate this rapprochement against us. It is important not to make a strategic error and treat Taiwan as a province of Communist China."

The U.S., he said, still has the responsibility and the obligation to protect Taiwan based on the spirit of the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979.

But the Taiwanese president went out of his way to extend an olive branch to China's president, Jiang Zemin, suggesting that their two countries settle their differences quietly, without the U.S.

"You can see that they have criticised me so violently and I have not said a word," said Mr. Lee, speaking of Beijing's propaganda attacks on him, which have only made him more popular at home. "I can assure you that we are going to deal with this problem with patience, reason and calm, not emotion. We are opening the door."

Mr. Lee expressed his hope to meet with Mr. Jiang, and he seemed to hint that he might be flexible on the venue. Until now Taiwan has insisted on an international setting, while Beijing wants it in China.

"Perhaps after the power shifting is sorted out in Beijing and the elections are over in Taiwan, we could all consider the possibility of a meeting again," said President Lee. "Jiang Zemin's position is very delicate right now, and so we need to wait for a quiet moment when things might be less sensitive."

What would he tell

Wave of gang violence leaves Los Angeles under siege

By Jeff Meyer

Associated Press

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By Jeff Meyer

Associated Press

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TOBER 22, 1995 6

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Features

Jordan Times, Sunday, October 22, 1995 7

Nabulsi clarifies report on Jordanian banks in West Bank

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan has accepted a request from the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) that all Jordanian banks operating in the West Bank and Gaza Strip place 40 per cent of their deposit accounts with the PNA, but this move would be effective only after Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, the governor of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) said Saturday.

CBJ Governor Mohammad Nabulsi also said he was not aware of another requirement by the PNA that all banks operating in the Palestinian territories invest 40 per cent of their deposits in projects in the territories.

"We have accepted a PNA requirement that all banks operating in the West Bank and Gaza Strip keep 40 per cent of their deposits as reserves with the PNA," Dr. Nabulsi said, adding that this requirement was contained in a circular the Palestinian Monetary Authority had sent to all commercial banks in the territories.

"However, we insisted that the placing of the reserves will take effect only with the completion of Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank,

the CBJ governor told the Jordan Times.

Under the Sept. 28 self-rule accord signed by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel, the withdrawal is expected to be completed by early next year.

A report in the local press Saturday said that the PNA circular to banks also contained a requirement that the banks should also specify a minimum of 40 per cent of their deposits for investments in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but Dr. Nabulsi said he was not aware of such a requirement.

Dr. Nabulsi said he had met with Foad Bseiso, head of the Palestinian Monetary Authority, late last week in Amman and there was no discussion of such a requirement.

"There have been a few press reports but I am not aware of any such demand," said Dr. Nabulsi.

In any event, the basic understanding about any investment requirement is that the funds would come only from the accounts of the banks in the area of operations and not from the head office.

A local newspaper which reported the purported requirement from the PNA said that if the demand was en-

forced then Jordanian banks operating in the West Bank and Gaza would come under pressure to recall some of their loans given to Jordanian businesses and industries in the West Bank.

"Banking sources fear pressure on the liquidity of some banks that may result in heightened competition for deposits and increased interest rates," the report said.

According to the report, the Palestinian Monetary Authority is complaining that some of the Jordanian banks were benefiting from the interest differential in Jordan, where the average yield on medium-term interest on dinar deposits is around 7.5 per cent, and the Palestinian territories, where the interest is around nine per cent.

The authority says, according to the report, some banks were only attracting deposits and not reinvesting the funds in the territories. In some cases, according to the report, some banks extend credit only to certain companies and parties "outside the territories."

More than 15 branches of Jordanian banks operate in the occupied West Bank and the autonomous Gaza Strip, having opened them in the last two years following the breakthroughs in the Middle East peace process.

Egypt to launch project to manage gas pipeline

CAIRO (R) — Egypt will set up a joint venture firm to manage a natural gas pipeline intended to reach Europe and is considering U.S. oil firm Amoco and Italy's Agip as partners, Egypt's oil minister was quoted as saying.

Hamdi El Banhi said in an interview published in the official Al Ahran newspaper that if the project was approved, Amoco, Agip and the Egyptian General Petroleum Company (EGPC) would each contribute 33 per cent to the company's capital. He did not specify when it would be set up.

He said Egypt was still negotiating with the governments of Israel, Jordan and the PLO establishing the pipeline across their territories but extending it to Europe via Turkey would wait a while.

"But the current stage of this project will stop at extending the pipeline to Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian areas because with our current reserves we are unable to sign any contracts with European countries," he said.

Egypt's natural gas reserves were estimated in July at 32.3 trillion cubic feet and Mr. Banhi said Egypt had intensified efforts to discover new gas finds.

Developing countries urged to monitor capital inflows

WASHINGTON (USIA) — A major lesson of the Mexican financial crisis is that while developing countries should seek private capital inflows to help their economies grow, they must be ready to act to limit the damage should those flows suddenly reverse, says the director of the Bank of International Settlements (BIS).

"The potential for volatility is greater than we believed," said Andrew Crockett, managing director of the BIS, who spoke recently at the International Finance Corporation (IFC) on capital flows after the Mexican crisis.

"The task is how to reduce vulnerability," he said. The BIS, based in Basle, Switzerland, promotes cooperation among central banks in international financial settlements. BIS members include most industrial countries.

Private capital inflows to developing countries have traditionally included loans and direct foreign investment. In recent years, portfolio investments and returning flight capital have played an increasing role, adding a new dimension of volatility.

Much of the capital inflows to Mexico prior to 1994 were portfolio investment and capital belonging to Mexicans that had been held outside of Mexico.

Mr. Crockett defended the portfolio inflows, arguing that they can be as beneficial

as other kinds of investment providing they are used to support the right types of domestic investments.

In Mexico, large capital inflows in 1990-1993 helped the economy grow. Then in 1994 changes in world economic conditions, including rising U.S. interest rates, and several severe domestic political shocks caused capital to start flowing out of Mexico, placing downward pressure on the peso exchange rate.

The Mexican government tried to defend the exchange rate, using its foreign exchange reserves, which dropped from \$25,500 million at the end of 1993 to \$6,300 million at the end of 1994, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In December 1994 the peso was allowed to float and lost 50 per cent of its value, causing a recession and economic crisis in Mexico that required an international rescue led by the United States.

Despite Mexico's bad experience, Mr. Crockett said developing countries should continue to seek private capital flows, including short-term portfolio financing. The inflows, he said, should encourage discipline at the macroeconomic level with developing countries' officials insisting on certain policies because the "markets must be satisfied."

At the microeconomic level, projects financed with international flows are more likely to focus on maintaining a good rate of return, he said.

"The cost of getting these benefits is that you have to protect yourself from market reversals," Mr. Crockett said.

Mr. Crockett cited a number of lessons from the Mexican crisis that could guide policymakers around future crises.

First, he said, a country must implement and maintain an economic reform policy that is "consistent and credible." This policy should be supported by a strong fiscal policy, so that the government itself does not have to borrow from foreign markets.

If more capital flows in than can be "fruitfully absorbed" by the domestic economy, Mr. Crockett said the governments can step in to absorb some of the assets through savings plans or similar measures.

Another lesson is that a balance-of-payments deficit even without a fiscal budget deficit, such as was the case in Mexico, "is potentially dangerous." To counteract such danger, it is necessary for a country to hold foreign exchange reserves, he said.

"Holding reserves may be part of the price of participation in international markets," he said.

Also a lesson of the Mexican peso crisis, Mr. Crockett said, is that capital controls can be relaxed too fast. Colombia, Chile and East Asian countries phased out capital controls more slowly, he said.

When countries are faced with capital flight, however, it is important not to reinstate controls on outflows because that would worsen the situation, he added.

The need for developing countries to strengthen their domestic savings is another lesson from Mexico, Mr. Crockett said, noting that there are risks when foreign inflows replace domestic savings. Improving domestic savings requires strengthening of the domestic banking systems, a task that entails many small changes in banking regulations, Mr. Crockett said, warning as well against excessive short-term domestic borrowing.

An additional lesson is that countries with fixed exchange-rate policies must have an "exit-strategy" for what to do when the rate can no longer be maintained, he said.

While the enormous financial package that was put together to help Mexico has proved beneficial, Mr. Crockett said, it is "politically inconceivable" that such a rescue would be possible for other countries. He also said that putting together a fund to handle future financial crises would create a dangerous "moral hazard": Countries may be more likely to get into trouble if they believe some international pot of money will rescue them.

"By getting it together you greatly increase the possibility it will be used," Mr. Crockett said. Instead, he said, it would be better if the countries only designed the mechanism for providing help.

Mr. Crockett said countries should be encouraged to publish as many valuable economic statistics on a timely basis as possible, but noted that Mexico published much data that apparently was not fully appreciated in the months leading up to the crisis. The IMF, he added, should also publish more of its market assessments.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Astrological Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Try to be of greater assistance to those who need your help today and show that you are a fine humanitarian, who enjoys to help others.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Plan early today to do what you enjoy and then carry through with the project in a positive way and don't go off on any tangents which will deflect from your desires.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Get conditions improved at home today so that you have more harmony and happiness there later in the day for there to be contentment.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Study into the finest of principles and then apply them to daily living especially today and you will have greater prosperity with your activities.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have good ideas in the morning today about how you can become more prosperous and successful so carry through with them without delay.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You understand how to gain your personal objectives early today and later this evening go after them successfully in such a manner, which will be beneficial.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get into philosophical studies today which will help you to handle personal affairs better. Take care you do nothing which could disturb your mate.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be with a dynamic friend during the daytime today. Avoid one you know who tells too many lies, and you will keep out of difficulties.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You understand better how to gain more prestige in the outside world at this time. Don't make any changes in your method or operating.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You have a plan worked out for which you need financial help at this time, so see that financier you know who is at leisure today.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Begin the day today sensibly by handling and unfinished business which has been delayed, but don't take on any new responsibilities.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You can carry through with promises which have been made to others easily. Show that you have fine abilities, which should come to the attention of higher-ups.

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline

Greenspan sees strong U.S. economy if deficit is cut

WASHINGTON (R) — Federal Reserve (Fed) Chairman Alan Greenspan Friday predicted a "very impressive" future for the economy and a "terribly successful 21st century" if Washington succeeds in reining in the budget deficit.

"All of us... have to recognize what we have here is a very major stake," the central bank chief said. "If this process of bringing the deficit finally under control succeeds, then the economic outlook is really very impressive."

For now, Mr. Greenspan told the National Italian American Foundation, the economy looks to be in balance — a remark that suggested he is in no rush to cut interest rates again.

"For the moment, we have a relatively balanced set of forces," he said, adding, "it's difficult to read and I'm sure

they're not going to stay that way terribly long."

But Mr. Greenspan said the longer-term outlook was clearer — and brighter — provided the United States reins in the \$160 billion-a-year federal budget deficit.

"We have developed into an extraordinarily first class economy," he said. "We have moved to the forefront of economic development in a manner which is suggestive of a terribly successful 21st century if we can get over this particular hump."

The Republican-led Congress and President Clinton have both vowed to balance the budget but have been at loggerheads over how to do it, although in recent days there have been signs of impending compromise.

Mr. Greenspan declined to be drawn into the budget debate. But he did stress that the only way to achieve a

balanced budget in the long run was through cuts in government spending, not increases in taxes.

He also repeated his support for efforts by some lawmakers to save the government money by lowering the annual cost of living increases in pension and other benefits it pays out.

Those cost of living increases are calculated based on the government's consumer price index. Mr. Greenspan said that for technical reasons the index overstates actual inflation by up to one percentage point.

Whatever the shape of the eventual budget deal, many Wall Street analysts expect the central bank to cut interest rates to help offset the short-term drag on the economy that would come with lower government spending.

The Fed cut short-term rates for the first time in

nearly three years in July, but has held them steady since then as the economy has shown signs of recovering from a second quarter slump in growth.

The Fed chief gave no hint of what the central bank's response might be to a budget deal.

But in a separate interview Friday, Fed Governor Edward Kelley warned against expectations of a tit-for-tat interest rate cut by the central bank in response to a budget agreement.

While not ruling out a further rate cut, Mr. Kelley played down the economic impact of the so-called fiscal drag from budget cuts.

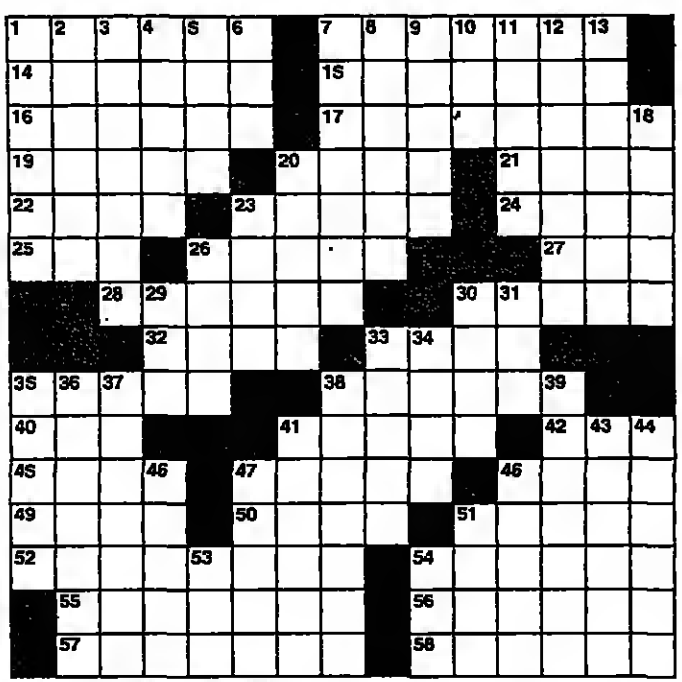
"I am not concerned that... if going to drag the economy down," he said, "there are many favourable things that are going to ensue... that in my view will easily overcome the drag."

In his remarks, Mr. Greenspan emphasised the benefits from cutting the deficit, and the risks if that was not carried out.

THE Daily Crossword by Glenton Petgrave

ACROSS

- 1 Lynx
- 7 Possible cold sign
- 14 Don a judge's garb
- 15 In name only
- 16 Cozed
- 17 Retired, in a way
- 19 That is
- 20 Stipulation
- 21 Make over
- 22 Stupely
- 23 Printing errors
- 24 Combo
- 25 Gaze at
- 26 Removed fruit part
- 27 Broke bread
- 28 Imaginary animal
- 30 Narrow back street
- 32 God of love
- 33 Military cap
- 35 In force
- 38 Small bird
- 40 Storage place
- 41 Stigmatize
- 42 Part of a lip
- 45 Stuff and nonsense
- 47 Smiles broadly
- 48 Partial: pref.
- 49 On top of
- 50 Strong drinks
- 51 Beer
- 52 Line-up member
- 53 Cape
- 55 Unexpected success
- 56 Exact satisfaction for
- 57 Stealth
- 58 Certain fish



Yesterday's puzzle solved:



DOWN

- 1 Next to
- 2 Some future time
- 3 Moved effortlessly
- 4 Thicket
- 5 Lead on
- 6 Turner
- 7 Make more precipitous
- 8 Great hunter
- 9 News articles
- 10 Hairy coat
- 11 Coquette
- 12 Kind of pass
- 13 Well-educated
- 18 Pigs' attention getter
- 20 Novices
- 23 Take-out words
- 26 Concern
- 29 Gun an engine
- 30 Imitated
- 31 Ad — (improvise)
- 33 Asian rulers
- 34 Etamitas
- 35 Head of a monastery
- 36 Jungle queen
- 37 Usher in
- 38 Books for young readers
- 39 Well-bred
- 41 Vicious ones
- 43 Come into existence
- 44 Building beam
- 46 Folksy
- 47 Wine source
- 48 Cavalry sword
- 51 Volcanic rock
- 53 Adults
- 54 Small amount



Peanuts



Andy Cap



Mutt'n'Jeff



Jordan's first export bank to open early '96

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan's first export finance bank is expected to open in early 1996 to service the country's rapidly growing export industry and exploit business opportunities from peace in the Middle East.

"By the end of this year all legal requirements will be met and by the first quarter of next year operations will start," said Ziyad Fariz, head of the founding committee of Jordan Export and Finance Bank.

Dr. Fariz told Reuters the specialist bank "would provide short and long-term financing to help exporters expand their production base by investing in new technologies."

"With the country adopting export oriented policies, there is an export sector bound to grow," he added. The bank, with 20 million dinars (\$2.8 million) in capital, has raised 16 million dinars (\$2.2 million) from a private placement with big industrial firms and state investment bodies.

Its institutional shareholders include Jordan's two main hard currency export earners: Arab Potash Company, and Jordan Phosphate Mines Company. Others include the private industrial Nuqul Group, Jordan's pharmaceutical holding company, Hikma Investments, leading insurance companies and members of Jordan's Trade Association of Exporters.

The remaining four million dinars (\$5.6 million) were offered in a public flotation that closed Thursday.

The Central Bank, seeing the need for a specialist bank to offer export-finance granted the bank's licence this year, the first new banking licence since the late 1970s.

The Central Bank has told the new bank it must have at least 50 per cent of its business in export-related activity.

U.S., Europe compromise on Middle East bank

Reuters

TEL AVIV — An economic summit in Amman this month will announce a compromise between Europe and the United States establishing two institutions to develop the Middle East, Israeli and U.S. officials said last week.

Washington and several European states had argued over the necessity of a Middle East development bank, with the U.S. backing the idea and some Europeans favouring a smaller institution channeling funds to the region.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told reporters the creation of a Cairo-based regional development bank would be announced at the Amman summit.

announced at the Amman summit.

A second financial institution is also to be created at the conference, formed from the "permanent secretariat" of an economic working group set up at the first Middle East development conference in Casablanca last year.

This Amman-based institution "will deal with specific projects and seek funds (elsewhere) without having a permanent fund," Economics Minister Yossi Beilin said.

U.S. Ambassador Martin Indyk said the development bank would have an authorised capital of \$5 billion, with \$1.25 billion in paid-up capital.

"These funds would be used to leverage resources that already exist in the private sector, the World Bank, the European Investment Bank, and various Arab Gulf funds," Mr. Indyk told Israeli businessmen.

Mr. Beilin said details of both institutions are still under negotiation and would be finalised in December.

An Israeli source said the U.S. is opposed to having two permanent financing institutions in the region, but may drop its opposition by the time the development bank is set up in two years.

Talking about the summit, Israeli and U.S. officials said it would focus on business

and not politics, unlike Casablanca.

"Casablanca was the opening up of relations with our neighbours. It was the death of the Arab boycott," Mr. Beilin said. "In Amman we do business."

More than 60 countries will be represented at the three-day conference starting on Oct. 29.

Mr. Indyk said Israel's role in the region's development must be a balanced one.

"Israel's large and dynamic economy, advanced industries, and highly skilled workforce are both attractive and intimidating to your Arab neighbours," he said.

U.S. chipmakers AMD and Nexgen to merge

SUNNYVALE, California (AP) — One of the oldest makers of computer chips joined forces with a young upstart in a surprise \$840 million merger aimed at creating a formidable challenger to industry-leading Intel Corp.

The Friday marriage of Advanced Micro Devices Inc. (AMD) and Nexgen marked a rarity in the computer chip industry, where rising costs have forced numerous joint ventures but few outright mergers.

The AMD-Nexgen announcement capped a week in which Intel reported powerful earnings gains and a dramatic expansion of its global chip-making capacity. The merger reflected how Intel's competitors feel unable to keep pace.

AMD repeatedly has delayed production of a computer chip that would rival Intel's Pentium processor, now the standard brains for most personal computers. The marriage with Nexgen is aimed at catching Intel as the industry is preparing to move to an even more powerful generation of computer chips.

AMD, founded in 1969, is one Silicon Valley's pioneers. Nexgen, less than a decade old, is best known for innovative design of chips but no

manufacturing ability and limited sales.

Under the agreement approved by both companies' boards, Nexgen shareholders will get 8 share of AMD for each share of Nexgen, a deal AMD chief executive officer Jerry Sanders said was worth about \$840 million.

The deal, under discussion for the past two months, is expected to close in the first quarter of 1996.

Mr. Sanders said the merger catapults AMD into competition against Intel, which has 80 per cent of the market for computer chips.

"What the customers want is a credible alternative," he said. "We want to offer a complete series of products. This works perfectly for us."

Adiq Raza, Nexgen's chief executive, will be the merged company's chief technical officer and will report to Mr. Sanders. He also will sit on the board.

"This is more than a straight merger. We consider it to be a strategic merger," he said.

The announcement came after the close of stock trading. AMD shares finished at \$26.12 1/2, down 75 cents on the New York Stock Exchange. Nexgen shares finished at \$21.25, down 37 1/2 cents.

AMD, the nation's fourth-largest chip maker, has been hurt by industry price cuts and the demand for upgraded versions. Last week it reported a 35 per cent drop in third-quarter profit.

The company's flagship product, the AM486, is a clone of Intel's 486 chip.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
JORDANIAN STOCK EXCHANGE - AMMAN - JORDANIAN				
ORGANISED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 21/10/1995				
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	LASTING PRICE
GENERAL MARKET				
AMMAN BANK P.C.	540	132150	245.500	245.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	2676	11772	4.400	4.400
BANK OF JORDAN	1718	6925	4.000	4.000
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	450	545	1.230	1.230
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	6800	16482	2.400	2.450
JORDAN KINLEY BANK	349	1047	2.850	2.840
JORDAN GULF BANK	25335	29280	1.150	1.150
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	450	1665	3.700	3.700
BUSINESS BANK	1900	6467	3.400	3.400
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	1540	5728	3.720	3.720
BEIT ISLAMIC INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	1200	8685	7.250	7.250
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	282417	299990	1.010	1.060
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	100	523	5.260	5.260
WILHELMSSA INVESTMENT BANK	12000	10895	2.540	1.563
BANKING SECTOR	337465	533753	INDEX NUMBER: 194.21	CHANGE: -0.12%
INSURANCE SECTOR				
JORDAN FIRE INSURANCE	600	1603	2.650	2.670
INSURANCE SECTOR	600	1603	INDEX NUMBER: 130.79	CHANGE: +0.05%
REAL ESTATE SECTOR				
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	65299	109701	1.670	1.580
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	97	256	2.650	2.650
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	6780	14048	2.070	2.080
BEIT ISLAMIC INVESTMENT	1200	2660	2.210	2.210
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	1500	1755	1.170	1.170
SECURITY TRADING, TRADING & MAINTENANCE	6000	4140	6.90	6.90
UNITED ISLAMIC BANK & COMMERCIAL HOTELS	7679	15534	2.350	2.420
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	21805	75076	3.540	3.470
WILHELMSSA INVESTMENT BANK	12113	11113	1.240	1.180
UNION LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.	3800	4198	1.120	1.290
SERVICES SECTOR	121416	239427	INDEX NUMBER: 130.37	CHANGE: -0.04%
MANUFACTURING SECTOR				
ATTACHED CORST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	3000	3600	1.200	1.200
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	15830	59403	3.750	3.750
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	1013	3038	3.010	3.000
THE ARAB POTASH	500	2460	4.910	4.920
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	1013	9661	9.500	9.450
JORDAN TANNING	225	1708	7.600	7.600
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	1888	8929	4.780	4.780
JORDAN DAIRY	100	252	2.520	2.520
THE JORDAN TISSUE MANUFACTURING	100	1586	2.410	2.440
THE PUBLIC MINTING	500	1460	2.920	2.920
RAZIA INDUSTRIES	1000	2288	2.280	2.290
DR. AL JAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	1714	12335	7.140	7.140
THE JORDAN TISSUE MANUFACTURING	1200	6567	5.500	5.470
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	34250	23498	6.90	6.80
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	6600	9466	1.430	1.430
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	5550	8039	1.450	1.450
THE JORDAN PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	23850	45923	1.950	1.950
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	21450	28132	1.310	1.320
ARAB CENTER FOR FERTILISERS & CHEMICALS	3800	7786	2.040	2.040
KAPTHOR INVESTMENT	9578	1.650	1.620	1.620
UNIVERSAL NORTHERN INDUSTRIES	600	1585	2.640	2.640
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	16100	32219	1.980	2.000
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	21950	50521	1.600	1.600
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	47000	68288	1.420	1.470
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRY	6650	13680	2.030	2.000
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	222389	394956	INDEX NUMBER: 125.45	CHANGE: 0.00%

BUSINESS FIRST BEST

A review of news from the Arabic press

Foreigners barred from gas station jobs

NON-JORDANIAN labourers will not be given permits to sell petroleum products at gas stations in main cities but can obtain permits to work in washing and lubricating cars, fixing punctured tyres and other general car service jobs if Jordanian labourers were not available, the minister of labour told a group of gas station owners. At another meeting with the head and members of the association of bakeries' owners, the minister stressed that non-Jordanians are not allowed to sell bread directly to the public and to take accountancy and administrative positions at the bakeries. He said non-Jordanians could be employed in other sections such as the production of bread (Al Ra'i).

Road projects in Amman at JD35m

THE VOLUME of work on opening, asphaltting and maintaining roads in the Amman Governorate over the coming five years is estimated at JD39 million. According to Abdul Wahab Arabiyat, the works director at the governorate, JD16 million will go for reconstructing main and secondary roads, JD8 million for routine and anti-hazard maintenance, JD6 million for reconstructing and improving village roads, JD5 million for asphaltting roads and JD4 million for opening and paving agricultural roads. Mr. Arabiyat said his department has a JD12.7 million budget for next year (Al Ra'i).

Proposals to curb bouncing cheques

THE COMMITTEE entrusted to review the phenomenon of bouncing cheques has presented its recommendations to the legal authorities to amend the penalties for writing cheques without having sufficient funds in the accounts. The full recommendations of the committee are as follows:

- Banning the use of bookstore cheques.
- Partial payments of a cheque's value if the full amount in an account was not sufficient. Example if this would be presenting the bank with a cheque for JD5,000 when funds in the account amount only to JD1,000. Partial payment would be for the bank to pay JD1,000 of the cheque's value.
- Consolidating the strength of a domestic bill by first paying its value and presenting the objection afterwards except when in cases of forgery.
- Adopt the magnetic cheques issued by banks or institutions authorised to issue cheques.
- Lowering the value of stamps on bills discounted.
- Keeping penalties at their maximum level but giving the minimum sentence if the value of the cheque was paid or settled to the plaintiff's satisfaction (Al Dustour).

Oil company to have NRA staff

THE NATIONAL Oil Company (NOC) has agreed with the government to select 250 employees working in the petroleum field at the Natural Resources Authority to work for the company. The remaining 150 staff will be absorbed within the ranks of the authority. NOC chairman Rajah Al Saad said the company was able to take a JD250,000 advance from the government to pay for various establishment costs including office rent. After starting operations, NOC will finance part of the costs by splitting the returns from petroleum and gas supplies with the government in accordance with a concession agreement discussed by the cabinet yesterday (Saturday) (Al Dustour).

Butter prices go up by 80%

PRICES OF butter have went up by 80 per cent while prices of animal fat have risen by 100 per cent, an importer of milk products has said. He attributed the increase to reduced subsidies by European countries on these products, pointing out that most affected in the local market were cheese, butter, cream and animal fat. The importer said that more than ten companies which import butter are facing lower profit compared to previous years. He referred to the price increase of animal fat and advised the consumers to switch to vegetable fat and vegetable oil processed locally (Al Aswak).

Financial Markets

Jordan Times in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank			
U.S. Dollar in International Markets			
Currency	New York Close 19/10/95	New York Close 20/10/95	
Sterling Pound*	1.5755	1.5735	
Deutsche Mark	1.4070	1.3975	
Swiss Franc	1.1480	1.1410	
French Franc	4.9485	4.9140	
Japanese Yen	100.34	100.33	
European Currency Unit	1.3050	1.3085	

Remittance Interest Rates				
Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.59	5.68	5.68	5.62
Sterling Pound	6.43	6.50	6.56	6.49
Deutsche Mark	3.87	3.87	3.87	3.87
Swiss Franc	1.93	2.00	2.06	2.06
French Franc	5.68	5.68	5.62	5.62
Japanese Yen	0.15	0.06	0.06	0.05
European Currency Unit	5.68	5.70	5.68	5.70

Precious Metals			
Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	USD/Gm
Gold	382.30	7.50	5.37
Silver	5.37	0.10	

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin		
Date: 21/10/1995		
Currency	Buy	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7100	0.7120
Sterling Pound	1.1158	1.1214
Deutsche Mark	0.5075	0.5100
Swiss Franc	0.6216	0.6247
French Franc	0.1444	0.1451
Japanese Yen	0.7071	0.7106
Dutch Guilder	0.4532	0.4555
Swedish Krona	0.0441	0.0445
Italian Lira	0.0000	0.0000
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000

Other Currencies		
Date: 21/10/1995		
Currency	Buy	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.5630	1.5800
Lebanese Lira*	0.043560	0.044650
Saudi Riyal	0.1490	0.1503
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3650	2.3650
Omani Riyal	0.1928	0.1951
Egyptian Pound	0.2828	0.2880
Omani Riyal	1.8350	1.8450
UAE Dirham	0.1927	0.1937
Greek Drachma	0.2875	0.2915
Cypriot Pound	1.5315	1.5985

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ENGLISH SOCCER ROUNDUP

Six of the best for Newcastle

LONDON (AFP) — Leaders Newcastle crushed 10-man Wimbledon 6-1 on Saturday, but premiership rivals Manchester United kept up the pressure on the Magpies by trouncing Chelsea 4-1.

Third-placed Arsenal made sure they stayed in touch with a 2-0 victory over much fancied Aston Villa.

Newcastle, who have won 11 of their last 12 matches, were boasting hat-trick hero Les Ferdinand after the rout — helped by Wimbledon keeper Paul Hield being sent off and midfield strongman Vinny Jones taking over in goal.

Steve Howey opened the scoring the 31st minute, heading home Keith Gillespie's cross for a well deserved lead. Five minutes later, Ferdinand established a post-war record for Newcastle, scoring in his seventh successive game, a header from David Ginola's cross.

Gillespie sent over another cross in the 41st minute and Ferdinand dived full length for another header past the keeper. Lee Clark scored the fourth with Wimbledon replying through Marcus Gayle.

Hield's dismissal then helped Ferdinand to his hat-trick and 15th of the season, while Belgian defender Philippe Albert, playing his first premiership match since last Christmas, made another scoring return.

Albert was also on the scoresheet in a League Cup win earlier this month.

Manchester United, anxious to reclaim the premiership title, swept to a fine victory at Stamford Bridge — but failed to stop former striker Mark Hughes from scoring against his old club.

Erick Cantona, making his 100th English appearance and his first return to London since the assault on a Crystal

Palace fan in January cost him his eight-month ban, had a memorable match. The Frenchman made two early goals for United's top scorer Paul Scholes.

Scholes struck first after just three and a half minutes. England right back Gary Neville lofted the ball over Chelsea's Dutch sweeper Ruud Gullit, a touch on by Cantona and Scholes knocked it home.

Cantona then laid on a beautiful ball for Scholes in the 10th minute to make it 2-0.

Hughes pulled one back in the 75th minute after Paul Furlong headed John Spencer's cross down. However, Hughes' Welsh international teammate Ryan Giggs eased United's Nerves in the 78th minute with a superb individual goal.

Collecting the ball on the halfway line, he evaded Steve Clarke's vaio challenge and went on to score. Brian McClair banged the fourth into the roof of the net but was later backed down by Frank Sinclair, prompting a red card for the Chelsea defender.

Arsenal took their record to seven wins in eight matches against villa, who hadn't been beaten in their last four visits to Highbury.

Villa cleared a Martin Keown header off the line and goalkeeper Mark Bosnich saved a snap shot from Dennis Bergkamp, before Arsenal finally broke the deadlock in the 47th minute.

Paul Merson tapped in after Dutchman Glen Helder's low cross had been fumbled by the Australian keeper. Ian Wright sealed the points for the gunners with a 78th minute strike.

Nottingham Forest set a new record unbeaten run in the premiership with 23 matches, bettering the pre-



Nottingham Forest's goalscorer Bryan Roy (right) is outjumped by Bolton's Richard Sneekes, during the two sides game (Reuters photo)

vious mark set by Manchester United in a 3-2 victory over struggling Bolton. Bolton's Dutch midfielder

Goalkeeper Mark Crossley helping it into the net.

But another Dutchman, Brian Roy, levelled it just three minutes later, converting Ian Woan's cross.

Steve Stone, who got the UEFA Cup winner against Auxerre, created Forest's second, passing along the goalline for Jason Lee to shoot home. However, Crossley made an even worse error in the 78th minute, clearing the ball only as far as Bolton's Dutch striker Fabian de Freitas who fired home with Crossley vainly trying to retrieve the ball.

Colio Cooper scored Forest's winner with a last-minute header.

Reigning champions Blackburn Rovers confirmed yet again they are a one-man team, drawing 1-1 with West Ham.

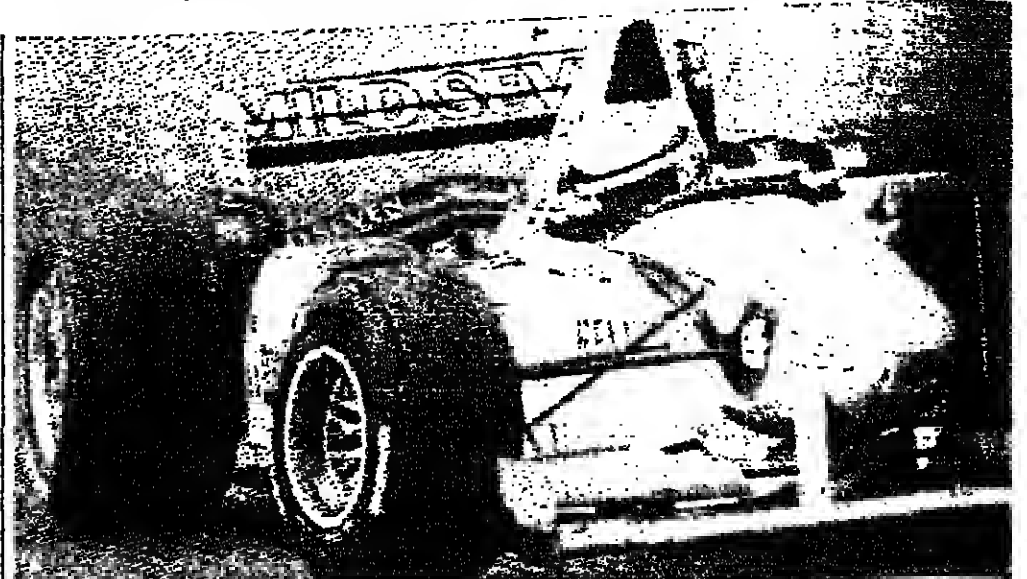
An Ian Dowie header in the 26th minute and the Hammers looked destined for a rare victory — only for England centre forward Alan Shearer to equalise in the 90th minute, earning Blackburn their first away point of the season.

Sheffield Wednesday beat Coventry 1-0, their first goal in three games, with Guy Whittingham working a one-two with Mark Bright before lobbing the keeper in the 16th minute.

Middlesbrough, playing their last game before Brazilian star Juninho comes on board, notched their seventh successive win — 1-0 against Queen Park Rangers.

Craig Hignett scored from the penalty spot after Nick Barry was fouled in 14th minute. Norwegian Jan Aage Fjortoft missed a second penalty after 46 minutes, hitting the crossbar.

Manchester City averted their ninth defeat in a row, grinding out a goalless draw with wayward Leeds United.



German World Champion Michael Schumacher has his front wheel facing in the wrong direction as he fights to correct his sliding Benetton during the final qualifying session for the Pacific Grand Prix (Reuters photo)

Schumacher: I'll fight for the title, not the race

AIDA, Japan (AFP) — Michael Schumacher will settle for third or fourth place in Sunday's Pacific Grand Prix to clinch his second straight world championship title, he said here on Saturday.

"I would be happy not winning the race, but it depends on the situation during the race. I'd rather be champion than out of the race," he said.

The world champion needs just three points — a fourth-place finish or better — on Sunday to retain his title against rival Damon Hill.

To beat him, Hill must win all of the last three races without Schumacher taking those three points.

The imminent title decision overshadowed the achievement of Hill's Williams Renault team-mate David Coulthard, who won pole position for the fourth successive race.

In Saturday's final qualifying session, Coulthard's pole time from Friday was not seriously challenged.

But to drive his superiority home, the Scot went out just

before the session ended and improved the time from his overnight 1min 14.182 sec to 1:14.013.

Although both Hill and Schumacher improved their times, they remained second and third on the grid.

Hill admitted: "I would have preferred if Michael had gone a bit faster than me, because now I'm starting on the dirty side of the track."

But tyre wear has been high in qualifying, and with a limit of seven sets for the weekend, Coulthard said: "In retrospect, I should not have done that last run."

Schumacher will be placed behind Coulthard on the cleaner section, and Hill said: "It is going to be more difficult for me to maintain my position into the first corner."

The Ferraris maintained their fourth and fifth places, Jean Alesi ahead of Gerhard Berger, who spun off without damage on his final run.

Eddie Irvine, hauled the Jordan Peugeot into the third row. "Starting near the front

is very important here because it's so difficult to overtake," he said.

Danish rookie Jan Magnussen (McLaren-Mercedes) qualified 12th for his first Grand Prix.

Veteran Aguri Suzuki, racing for the first time since the German Grand Prix, was the fastest of the Japanese drivers.

Ukyo Katayama, back after resting following his Portuguese accident, was unhappy with the handling of his Tyrrell Yutaka, slipping back on the grid to 17th, in front of team-mate Mika Salo.

Taki Inoue in the footwork hani qualified 20th, improving his overnight time by more than one second.

Run on the shortest circuit used for Grand Prix racing, 3.703 kilometres, the race covers the most laps, 83. It starts at 1400 local time (0500 GMT) Sunday.

Fine, sunny, warm weather is forecast, and in similar conditions last year the race lasted 1 hour 46 minutes.

Red Rum passes final post



Billy Ellison puts Red Rum through his paces on Southport sands

RED RUM, the most famous racehorse in Britain, was humanely destroyed two days ago after being found distressed in his box. Appropriately, the only horse to win the Grand National three times was later buried in the shadow of the winning post at Aintree racecourse.

Red Rum was 30, an exceptional age for a horse. His racing career began in the mid-1960s, and included a success in a Flat race in the hands of Lester Piggott. But it was when he passed into the care of Ginger McCain, a Southport car-salesman, that his progress towards stardom began.

McCain exercised Red Rum on the beach behind his showroom. In 1973 he won the National for the first time, beating Crisp in one of the most dramatic finishes seen at Aintree. He won again in 1974, finished second in 1975 and 1976, and completed his hat-trick the following year.

In Red Rum's time, the National course was more demanding than it is today. The public recognised his achievement, and Red Rum's popularity endured long after his racing days were over. He was in constant demand to open supermarkets and betting shops.

"He's always been brilliant with people," said Phil Harrison, his stable-lad in recent years. "As far as I know, he's never bitten or kicked anyone."

McCain said: "He was a tremendous old competitor, but much more than that. He'd switched on the Blackpool lights and was chieftain-of-honour at the Highland Games. He was a very remarkable horse, seriously magical." A memorial will be erected over Red Rum's grave in time for the next Grand National — The Independent.

Stich injured in Vienna tournament

VIENNA, Austria (AP) — Germany's Michael Stich suffered a possible season-ending ligament tear Friday when he took a hard spill in second-round play at the CA Trophy Tennis Tournament.

Stich, currently 12th in the world ATP rankings, was scrambling forward and to the left after a drop shot by Australia's Todd Woodbridge when he sharply twisted his left ankle and rolled over.

He was carried from the court on a stretcher with his ankle iced and taped.

"It's at least one torn ligament," Dr. Edi Lanz told the Austria Press Agency. Such injuries can take six weeks or more to heal. Stich's wife, Jessica, fainted as he was wheeled into the players lounge.

Stich, 27, reportedly declined to go to a Vienna hospital and planned to re-

turn Saturday to Munich, Germany, to see well-known specialist Hans-Wilhelm Muller-Wobliahr.

Woodbridge was serving with the score at 2-2 in the first set when Stich fell, forcing him to forfeit the match. He was seeded third in the \$500,000 tournament.

"I had already reached the ball, wanted to quickly change direction and tripped," Stich said. "It hit me like lightning."

The German has been trying to qualify for the year-end ATP World Championships, which he won in 1993. Only the top eight in the rankings are eligible for the November tournament.

The spill ended a disappointing season for the former Wimbledon champion whose best showing in the Grand Slam tournament was the 2nd round of the French Open.



Michael Stich

It also unsettled Woodbridge and top seed Thomas Muster of Austria who was preparing for his match against Alexander Volkov of Russia when Stich fell.

"My heart nearly stopped," Woodbridge said.

"You go into the next match with a bad feeling," said Muster who went on to defeat Volkov 7-6 (7-4), 6-1.

Sampras reaches semifinals

LYON, France (AP) — Top-seeded Pete Sampras moved a step closer to his fourth Lyon Open title by beating French qualifier Maxime Huard, 6-4, 6-2, in the quarterfinals Friday.

Sampras has averaged less than an hour for his first three matches and has yet to lose a set. He gained his 11th semifinal of the season in 14 tournaments.

Huard, 19, was ranked 361st before the tournament and was in awe of meeting Sampras. "I looked at him in the lockerroom, then in

warmups and then during the start of the match," Huard said. "It was hard for me to realise it was for real."

Sampras will meet fifth-seeded American, Todd Martin, next. Martin defeated Patrick Rafter of Australia, 4-6, 7-6 (7-2), 6-2.

Martin beat Sampras in the semifinals at Memphis in February.

In other quarterfinals, fourth-seeded Wayne Ferreira topped David Prinosil of Germany, 6-2, 1-6, 6-3 and second-seeded Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia.

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GOREN BRIDGE

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WHAT'S THE ODDS?

North-South vulnerable. South deals

NORTH
♠ Q J 10 9 8 3
♥ 7 4 2
♦ A Q
♣ K 5

WEST
♠ 6
♥ Q 6
♦ J 10 9 8 5
♣ Q J 10 8 4

EAST
♠ 7
♥ A 10 9 8 5 3
♦ K 2
♣ A 9 7 3 2

SOUTH
♠ A K 8 4 2
♥ A K J
♦ 8 7 4 3
♣ 6

The bidding:
SOUTH 1♠ 2NT 4♠
NORTH 1♠ 4♠
WEST Pass
EAST Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♠

It was one of those strange hands. As the Senior Kibitzer observed at the conclusion of the play: "If the finesse was going to work, there was no need to take it!"

West two no trump was unusual, showing the minor suits. East took advantage of the vulnerability to sacrifice in five clubs, but North was not selling out. Fortunately, South possessed the skill to justify North's bravado.

West led the queen of clubs against five spades, and declarer was delighted with the contract. The hand depended only on a successful finesse in one of the red suits, and the auction suggested that both would work.

Declarer took care to cover the queen of clubs with the king — no need to face a diamond shift at trick two. This proved to be critical. East won the ace and shifted to the ten of hearts, taken by the king in the closed hand. Declarer crossed to the queen of trumps, in the process drawing both missing fangs, and ruffed a club.

South was about to embark on a finessing expedition but suddenly applied the brakes. The light had dimmed — the heart finesse was unnecessary. Since West had at least 10 cards in the minors, the defender could not hold more than two hearts. There was a safety play available. Declarer continued by cashing the ace of hearts. When the queen dropped, all was well. But had the lady not appeared, declarer would have continued with a heart. East would win the trick with the queen of hearts, but would then be endplayed. A diamond would be into dummy's major tenace; any other suit would allow declarer to ruff in hand while denuding the queen of diamonds from the table.

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	Jean Reno, Natalie Portman & Gary Oldman...in Leon "The Professional" Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Charles Bronson in Death Wish "5" Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD "1" Adel Imam & Yusra Birds of the Darkness (Arabic) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:45 CONCORD "2" Arnold Schwarzeneger...in Conan The Barbarian Shows: 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:15	MUSA HIJAZIN "Sumaa" in Hi Citizen daily at 8:30 p.m. Written & directed by Mohammad Shawaqfeh	Presents "Peace Oh Peace" in English every Saturday. Show starts at 8:30 p.m. For reservation call 625155

Rockets kill 11 in Kabul

KABUL (R) — A rocket attack on Kabul killed 11 people and wounded 30 on Saturday as U.N. special envoy Mahmoud Mestiri arrived to try to negotiate a ceasefire to save the Afghan capital from a battle, witnesses said.

Three rockets landed about 11 a.m., one of them in a busy market street and two at a hospital, witnesses said.

At least eight people were killed and 30 wounded by one rocket that landed at Jushir Market Street, which connects Kabul's central district with southwestern suburbs. Three more people died later in hospital.

"The street was packed with shoppers and traders at the time of attack," one witness said. He said there was no advance warning.

The other two rockets hit Naiwand Hospital, 300 metres from the market street, wounding one person. One hit the paediatric ward, which doctors said had been vacated earlier for repairs. The second hit a classroom of medical students, who had left it minutes earlier for recess.

Doctors said they expected the death toll to rise because of the serious condition of several of the wounded.

Mr. Mestiri arrived to meet President Burhanuddin Rabbani, hoping to negotiate a ceasefire that could prevent a battle, while opposition Taliban militia wait on the city's southern fringes ready to launch a full-scale attack.

The Taliban, who emerged from obscurity in 1994, have reinforced their positions in the Rishkor and Khairabad hills overlooking the southern suburbs while

their leaders have warned civilians to leave the city before the attack begins.

The rival factions have fought one another for control of the country ever since they overthrew the former communist government in early 1992 after 14 years of war against a Soviet-backed government.

Kabul gas accused Pakistan of backing the Islamic student-led militia. Islamabad denies the charge.

Mr. Mestiri, who plans to return to Islamabad after a day in Kabul, said he was due to meet Mr. Rabbani later but declined to give details of his agenda.

His latest visit to the war-battered capital is the first since the Taliban closed in on the city 10 days ago.

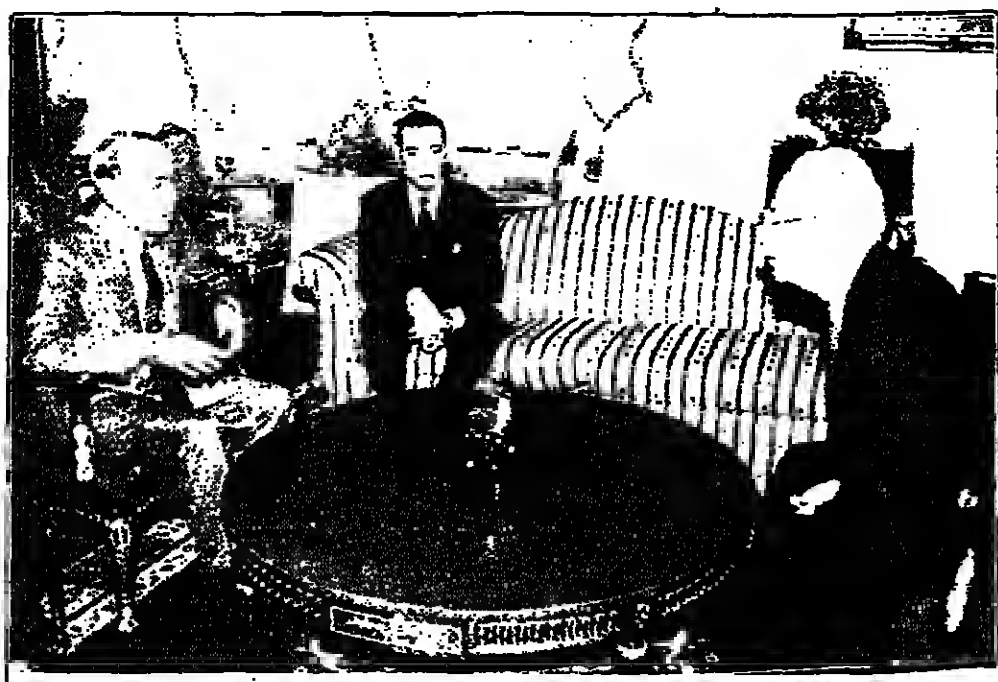
The Taliban have been building forces since then and holding talks with anti-Rabbani groups to organise a coordinated offensive on Kabul from every direction.

The last time Mr. Mestiri visited Kabul, he said his main objective was to avoid such an attack and arrange a short-term ceasefire to give rival leaders a chance to discuss a negotiated settlement to the 42-month-old civil war.

Many Western observers in Kabul believe military pressure is close to a breaking point and a decisive battle is not far away.

"I can't see how Mestiri can succeed," one Western resident said. "He is just basing his head against all the rival tanks."

"It would be nice if he could get them to pack up their guns and go home but there is just too much at stake here for all of them to walk away now."



MOROCCAN-ISRAELI TALKS: Morocco's King Hassan II (left) confers with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin at a Manhattan hotel on Friday in a meeting attended by Moroccan Crown Prince Sidi Mohammed (centre). King Hassan II and Mr. Rabin are in New York to attend the U.N.'s 50th anniversary celebrations (see story on page one) (AFP photo)

NATO seeks Claes successor

BRUSSELS (R) — North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) members on Saturday began assessing possible successors to Willy Claes who resigned as the alliance's secretary-general on Friday, accusing Belgian politicians and journalists of political murder.

A shortlist of candidates was being studied in 16 capitals in the wake of a shower of praise for Mr. Claes, who oversaw the biggest combat mission ever launched by NATO during his year at the helm of the world's largest military organisation.

The members are keen to have a replacement in place as quickly as possible as the alliance prepares to establish a force of up to 60,000 troops to police a Bosnian peace accord.

There are only two real contenders.

Former Danish Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen threw his hat in the ring even before Mr. Claes, a 56-year-old former foreign minister, had finished his farewell news conference.

The other was former Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers, who may face objections from German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, known to be unhappy about his opposition to German unification.

Mr. Claes stepped down after Belgium's parliament voted on Thursday to send him before the country's highest court.

"I have decided with great regret to resign," Mr. Claes told the news conference. "No one can deny that I no longer have enough credibility to ensure the leadership of this great alliance."

Crying political murder, Mr. Claes attacked parliament and the media for indicting him before an investigation into his possible role in a 1988-89 corruption scandal was completed.

Belgian newspapers accused Mr. Claes of bluntness and arrogance, saying he used the news conference at the Western alliance's Brussels headquarters for a vitriolic attack on the Belgian media, legislators and judiciary.

"This farewell lacked style and was soaked in bitter reproaches," the respected Dutch-language De Standaard said.

"Claes trips up our country," said the populist Het Laatste Nieuws, adding the 56-year-old bureaucrat had snarled at Belgium in the news conference.

It portrayed a finger-wagging Claes in vintage style, his glasses perched halfway down his nose.

In an angry statement, Mr. Claes reiterated his innocence in the bribery-for-contracts scandal that has dogged him since he became secretary-general on Oct. 17, 1994.

The allegations against Mr. Claes relate to payments allegedly made by two defence firms in the late 1980s to win his political party's backing for major contracts.

Mr. Claes, economic affairs minister at the time, is alleged to have known of the payments and to have done nothing about them.

Western leaders who sang his praises did nothing to dispel the impression he had been all but forced out to spare the organisation's blushes as it faces a testing time in former Yugoslavia and in trying to build constructive ties with Russia.

The United States, linchpin of NATO and one of the former Belgian minister's strongest defenders during his year in office, said he provided "great leadership" and would be missed.

Leaders, including U.S. President Bill Clinton, highlighted Mr. Claes's strong and effective advocacy of a robust military role for NATO in Bosnia. A bombing campaign by NATO was followed by the present ceasefire and peace moves.

Kuwait rebuffs allies over Iraq

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait is tacitly dismissing calls by two Gulf Arab allies for reconciliation with former occupier Iraq but wants to avoid a divisive, public row that could alienate important regional friends, diplomats said on Saturday.

"I think they (Kuwaiti officials) were extremely cross," one diplomat said. "But they thought it would be counter-productive to let the anger they feel come through undiluted into the public domain."

"The reaction has been deliberately kept low key," another diplomat said. "They do not want to get into a polemic with other GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) states."

No Kuwait official has so far reacted on the record to calls by Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) last week for lifting economic sanctions imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 to try to ease the suffering of fellow Arabs in Iraq.

Diplomats said Kuwait wanted to avoid setting off a damaging argument in the 14-year-old GCC economic and military alliance of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman.

Since its 1991 liberation Kuwait has worked hard with close ally Saudi Arabia to shore up support from all GCC members for the continuance of sanctions against Iraq.

Any prolonged differences with other GCC states on the issue would be a blow to Kuwaiti efforts to block what it sees as a continuing threat from an unrepentant northern neighbour.

Kuwait's only reaction came in a mildly-worded state radio commentary on Thursday that reiterated the official position that Iraq is responsible for its own people's suffering.

It said Iraq could solve it

under sanctions rules by selling limited amounts of oil for humanitarian purposes.

"The injury caused by Iraq is still bleeding (and) cannot be forgotten," it said. It added lifting of U.N. sanctions before Iraqi complies with ceasefire terms would reward Baghdad for invading its neighbours and oppressing its own people.

Under sanctions rules Iraq may not resume normal oil sales until the U.N. is satisfied that it has dismantled all its weapons of mass destruction. It has rejected selling limited amounts as this, it says, would infringe on its sovereignty.

Kuwait and the United States want the oil ban to stay until Baghdad has accounted for all Kuwaitis who went missing during the occupation and returned all property stolen in 1990-91.

The commentary also implicitly rejected the UAE's call for reconciliation between Kuwait and "pro-Iraq" Arab states.

The radio stopped short of naming any state but noted "some say let bygones be bygones and call for Arab reconciliation and solidarity," despite evidence of what it called Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's expansionist and aggressive intentions.

One Western diplomat said Kuwait and Saudi Arabia regarded any call from fellow Gulf Arabs for reconciliation with Iraq as naive, since Iraq had yet to satisfy U.N. disarmament conditions and in view of its track record.

Kuwait oppositionist, columnist Abdul Latif Al Qasbi wrote in Al Qabas daily:

"The Iraqi regime will not bestial to build on its expansionist ambitions and use its army for that purpose, irrespective as to whether the victims of such schemes are Iraq, Kuwait — or, for that matter, the UAE."

Barzan Tikriti fetes Saddam on his vote

BAGHDAD (R) — Barzan Al Tikriti, half-brother to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, put to rest rumours he had defected with a message on Saturday congratulating President Saddam on his victory in this week's referendum.

An opposition radio station based in rebel-held Iraqi Kurdistan had said Mr. Barzan, Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, refused to come back to Baghdad after President Saddam's two sons-in-law defected to Jordan in August.

But Mr. Barzan's message pledged continued support for President Saddam as leader and endorsed the result of the referendum. Over 99 per cent of the voters in the referendum on Sunday said they favoured giving President Saddam seven years as president.

"Barzan Al Tikriti pledged... to join the people on this day, saying 'yes' to Saddam Hussein as president of the republic," the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) said.

Mr. Barzan said he was right behind the Iraqi leadership and was committed to

working for the defence of the country's interests to restore it to its rightful place on the Arab and international stage, according to the message.

The referendum proves categorically that the Iraqi people have chosen, with complete freedom, to support their president, Saddam Hussein, known for his unflinching struggle to defend the independence and sovereignty of Iraq," the message continued.

INA said Mr. Barzan felt the referendum had given the people a democratic process for the first time in 35 years.

"We are full of confidence and faith that you will lead our steadfast people to the shore of safety, happiness and peace," said the message, quoted by the agency.

The opposition radio station, the Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation, had said Mr. Barzan, a presidential adviser and former head of Iraqi intelligence, posed a threat to President Saddam.

It said President Saddam's sons Uday and Qusay had confiscated all Barzan's possessions in Iraq two months earlier.

Egyptian court declines to rule on new press law

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's constitutional court refused Saturday to rule on the validity of a new press law which has provoked vehement protests from journalists who say it suppresses freedom of expression, legal sources said.

The court, which usually only rules on appeals from earlier cases, decided it was its "duty to judge on laws which have actually been implemented, so in this case there is no need for a ruling on it," the sources said.

President Hosni Mubarak had asked the constitutional court to review the law as a compromise to journalists, who had threatened a general strike to protest.

No one has yet been tried under the law, which was passed in May. But a first court case is to begin on Nov. 12 against Magdi Hussein, the editor-in-chief of an Islamic newspaper, his paper said Saturday.

Mr. Hussein, who heads Al Shaab newspaper, is charged with insulting the son of the interior minister and could face up to a maximum of 15 years in prison under harsh penalties for defamation in-

roduced in the new law. He told AFP before the latest ruling that if the court refused to judge the law, he would use his trial as a test case by asking that it be put before the constitutional tribunal.

In the wake of the court decision, Yahya Kalash, a member of the journalist union's directing council, told AFP: "We were expecting the court not to rule, so our hopes were not pinned on it."

But he said the council would hold an emergency meeting to address the trial of Mr. Hussein later on Saturday and would most likely call for an urgent session of the union's general assembly.

"The general assembly could decide to respond with a strike," Mr. Kalash said. Mr. Hussein accused the government of using the new law to "strike at the Islamic movement."

"This is a campaign against freedom of opinion and expression which focuses on the Islamic movement but for which all the opposition will pay the price," Mr. Hussein said.

Gamaa claims Croatia bomb, threatens more

CAIRO (R) — Egypt's largest militant group on Saturday claimed responsibility for a bomb in Croatia on Friday, and vowed to wage war on Croatia unless it released the group's spokesman.

Al Gamaa Al Islamiyah (the Islamic Group) claimed responsibility in a statement faxed to an international news agency for a bomb in the Croatian port of Rijeka on Friday which killed one person and injured 29.

The group, which narrowly failed to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in June, said it detonated the bomb to pressure Croatian authorities into releasing Talaat Fouad Qassem, their spokesman whose whereabouts were last known when Croatian police detained him last month.

"Your interests will be a target for us until you release Sheikh Talaat Fouad Qassem and officially apologise in your media for what happened. Close the door of hell — the situation you are in is bad enough," the statement said.

"O Croats, you are deceived if you think this will pass peacefully. The blood is boiling in the veins of the sons of the Gamaa... who will not be at peace unless Sheikh

Qassem is released as soon as possible or you will enter into a war the length of which God only knows," it added.

Sheikh Qassem, a political refugee in Denmark, was on his way to Bosnia to do research for a book when Croatian police detained him in Zagreb on Sept. 12. He has not been heard of since.

The Croatian government said he left the country some time between Sept. 14 and 18 after he was found guilty of breaking the regulations for being in the country.

Friday's bomb, in a part of Croatia far from the fighting in former Yugoslavia, went off seconds after an Italian-registered car had forced its way into police headquarters in Rijeka.

Croatian police had said they suspected drug crime with Italian connections or Serbs might have been involved.

"The military wing of the Gamaa Al Islamiyah announces it carried out its first operation against Croatian interests yesterday," the statement said.

"We tried all political and peaceful means to help Croatia return to its senses but it insisted on challenging the feelings of Muslims and acting with stupidity," the Gamaa said.

Bahrain's opposition calls for hunger-strike

MANAMA (AP) — A leading Shiite preacher recently freed from detention has called on supporters to go on a hunger-strike to demand democratic reform and the release from detention of hundreds arrested in anti-government riots.

Sheikh Abdul Ameer Al Jamri said Saturday he and five other Shiite clerics would begin a hunger strike Monday and would end it only when more than 500 detainees were freed.

He told the Associated Press he had made the call during a meeting Friday at a mosque some 15 kilometres southwest of Manama.

Hundreds of his supporters had promised to join, he said. "The government has not done what it had promised, which was the release of the detainees by Sept. 30. The deadline has passed already," Sheikh Jamri, 55, said.

He said his group — which he simply called "the opposition" — also wanted the government to reinstate a parliament it disbanded 20 years ago and of which he was a member.

Since last August, the government has released hundreds of prisoners in small batches in an effort towards reconciliation following the riots which began last December. Sheikh Jamri himself said 800 of nearly 1,400 detainees had been freed so far.

But his call for a hunger-strike sets the stage for a possible clash with the government and comes after Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa said in remarks published Friday that "acts of sabotage and violence" would not be tolerated.

Authorities in Bahrain, where some 55 per cent of the 500,000 indigenous population are Shiite Muslims, have been trying to restore calm after the rioting over high unemployment and the government's refusal to reinstate the parliament.

Smaller and sporadic protests continue, security sources say.

The government blames the riots on "outsiders," a reference to overwhelmingly Shiite Iran, which denies involvement.

Paris seeks help from U.S., Germany

PARIS (R) — France, reacting to a string of bombing attacks claimed by Algerian extremists, has again asked Germany and the United States to muzzle Algerian militants operating on their soil, the senate said on Friday.

The parliament's upper chamber said in a statement that Foreign Minister Herve de Charette discussed the matter with the its foreign affairs committee.

He "indicated that France has made appropriate diplomatic representations, notably to the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany, two countries in which key leaders of Algerian Islamic movements carry out political activities without restraint," it said.

Asked for details, a foreign ministry spokesman declined all comment, saying the committee's proceedings were secret. A spokesman for the senate declined to give additional details of Mr. De Charette's closed-door testimony on Thursday.

Seven people have been killed and about 170 wounded in eight bombing attacks

since July and France fears a war between the Algerian authorities and guerrillas is spreading to its territory — home to an estimated four to five million Muslims, about half of whom are of Algerian origin.

The Armed Islamic Group (GIA), a shadowy militant Islamic group trying to overthrow Algeria's military-backed government, has claimed responsibility for the bombings and wants France to withdraw support from the current authorities.

About 35,000 Algerians have died in civil strife since Algeria's military rulers intervened in 1992 to scrap a general election that Islamic fundamentalists were set to win.

Paris particularly wants to silence Rabah Kebir, president of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) leadership in exile, who lives in Germany, and Anwar Haddad, a leader of FIS parliamentarians, who lives in the United States. Both make periodic political statements.

German authorities say the 23,000 Algerians living in Germany include 30 to 50 FIS

members and 200 or so sympathisers.

They said on Thursday they had arrested two sons of Algerian fundamentalist opposition leader Abassi Madani as suspects in smuggling arms to anti-government forces in Algeria.

Salim and Ikbal Madani were among nine Algerians being investigated on suspicion of smuggling weapons, they said.

Bonn, Washington and London angrily rejected French accusations last year they were too tolerant of politically active Algerian fundamentalists living in exile in the West.

Then Interior Minister Charles Pasqua disclosed in August 1994 that he had complained to France's close allies about FIS activities on their soil.

It was the hardliner Pasqua, now a member of the senate, who raised the question of the exiles' current activities with Mr. De Charette on Thursday.

Yeltsin shocks secretary as cameras roll

MOSCOW (AP) — As television cameras rolled, President Boris Yeltsin greeted two secretaries with a tap — or was it a tweak? — on their backs, starting one of them. The gesture was followed by a "hello."

The incident occurred Thursday as Mr. Yeltsin entered an ornate Kremlin hall to meet with Russian and American journalists. The women — apparently stenographers — were sitting at a table and the president walked behind them. When Mr. Yeltsin tapped them as he passed, the first sat bolt upright, spun around and saw it was the president. The second showed little reaction. The president's office said it had no comment.

Diana backs mother's decision to become a Catholic

LONDON (AP) — Princess Diana supports her mother's decision to become a Roman Catholic. Frances Shand Kydd, who was raised in the Anglican Church, said none of her family was surprised by her decision and all four of her children were "really happy" for her. "One of them said: 'Oh mom — tell the world you have my total support,'" she said, refusing to say who it was. In an interview on Scottish Television released Friday, she said she decided to convert after attending services for six years at the Catholic Cathedral in Oban, near her Scottish home. "I was excited, happy, and very peaceful inside — I had no doubts," she said. "It was like coming home." Mrs. Shand Kydd said she was "proud to this" of Diana and admired how she coped with so many different issues.

Ex-wife wins Nobel Prize of her own

CHICAGO (R) — The ex-wife of this year's winner of the Nobel Prize for economics has won a prize of her own — half of his \$1 million winnings. When Lucas and his former wife, Rita, divorced in 1989 she had a provision placed in the couple's property settlement guaranteeing her half of his winnings should he receive a Nobel Prize before Oct. 31, 1995. "A deal's a deal," Robert Lucas of the University of Chicago told the Chicago Tribune in a report published Friday. Mr. Lucas — who won the prize on Oct. 10 for theories showing how consumer experience rather than government intervention shapes national economies — had been rumoured as a likely Nobel Prize candidate for some years. "It was her idea," the 58-year-old Lucas told the newspaper. "Maybe if I'd known I'd win I would have resisted the clause."

Hong Kong thieves bore into store, swipe jewels

HONG KONG (R) — Thieves bore into a jewellery store in the Mong Kok area of Hong Kong from an empty shop next door and made off with Hong Kong dollars 20 million (\$2.6 million) worth of loot, police said Saturday. Using a powerful drill, the robbers bored through a floor of the vacant site to a basement below and then through a wall adjoining the store early Friday morning. The stolen items included diamonds, gold, gold jewellery and cash.